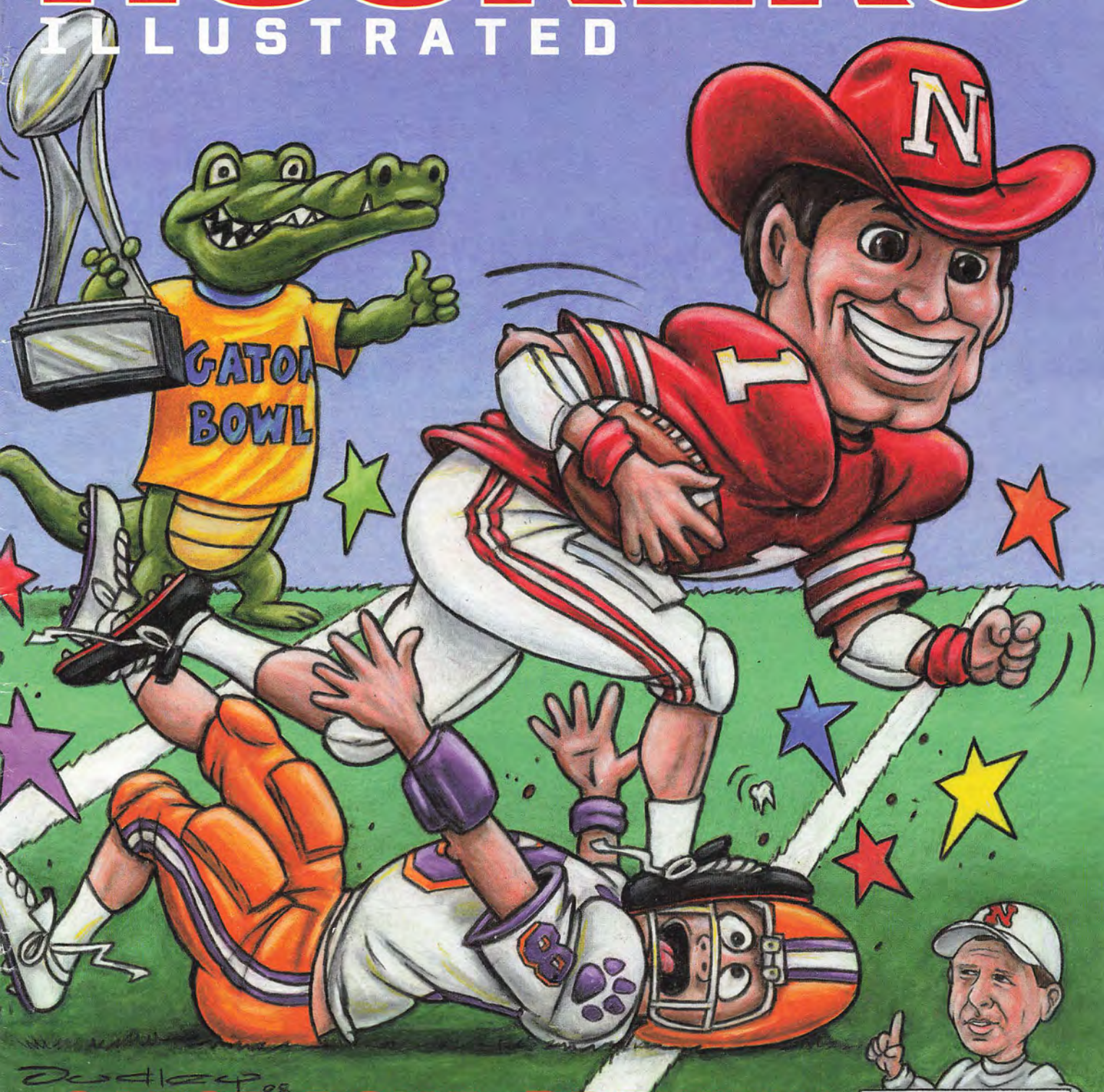


1982 ORANGE BOWL ■ JACKSONVILLE TRAVEL GUIDE ■ HUSKER BOWL HISTORY

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED



GATOR BOWL PREVIEW

JANUARY, 2009 | VOLUME 29 | NO. 1

\$3.95

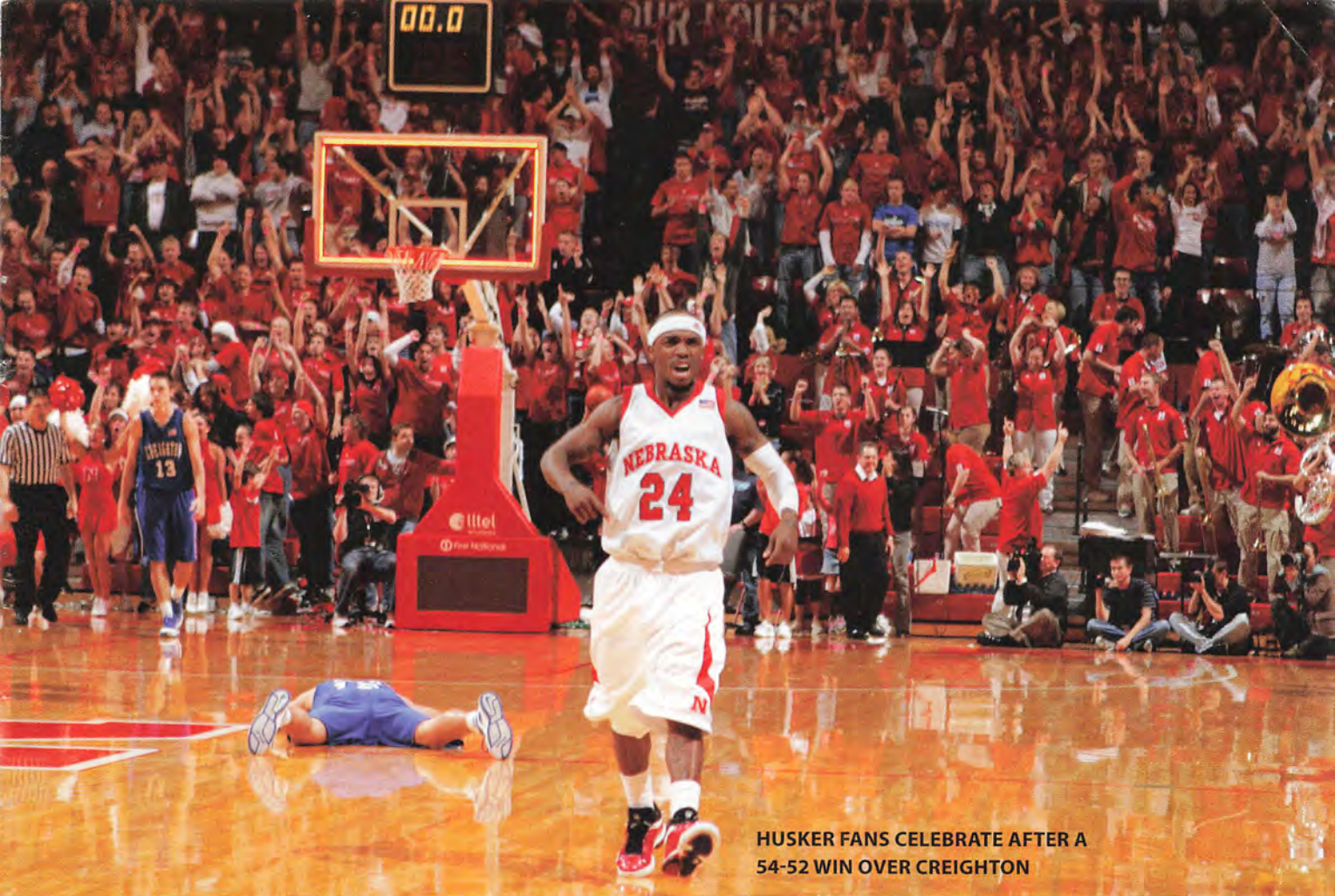


NO GIFT RECEIPT NEEDED.



Must be 19 or older to play. Please play responsibly. Compulsive Gambling Help Line 1-800-522-4700

nelottery.com



HUSKER FANS CELEBRATE AFTER A 54-52 WIN OVER CREIGHTON

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED

JANUARY, 2008 • VOLUME 29 • NO. 1

COLUMNS

4 FROM THE EDITOR by Aaron Babcock
New Year's Day Celebration

11 THE BIG 12 BEAT by Curt McKeever
Breaking down the Big 12 bowls

38 THE FINAL WORD by Mike Babcock
New Year's Day – a Husker tradition

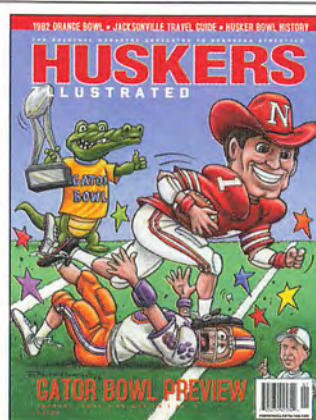
SPECIAL BOWL PREVIEW

7 GATOR BOWL PREDICTION

18 PREVIEWING CLEMSON

20 TOURING JACKSONVILLE

22 REVISITING THE 1982 ORANGE BOWL



ON THE COVER

Herbie Husker stomps on a Clemson football player on his way to the end zone as illustrated by special contributor Dayne Dudley. The Huskers are making their first-ever appearance in the Gator Bowl and will be playing Clemson for just the second time in school history. The only other time the two teams squared off was on Jan. 1, 1982 in the Orange Bowl, which saw Clemson win the national title with a 22-15 victory.

DON'T MISS

5 2MINUTE DRILL

10 HOMETOWN HERO

12 10 QUESTIONS

14 RECRUITING

24 RICKEY THENARSE

NEXT ISSUE

Volume 29, Issue 2 recapping the Kona Minolta Gator Bowl will be mailed on Monday, Jan. 12. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

Huskers add historic Gator Bowl to postseason list



There's just something special about playing on New Year's Day.

Of course, after sitting home during the Holidays two of the past four years, any bowl appearance is most appreciated by Husker fans.

The University of Nebraska has one of the most proud postseason histories in college football. So finding a new bowl locale after playing in 44 previous bowl games is not easy. Florida is not a new destination for the Huskers. Jacksonville is, however.

The Gator Bowl has a storied tradition over the past 60 years. Since its inaugural game between Wake Forest and South Carolina (which the Demon Deacons won 26-14), the game has hosted memorable games, college football's biggest stars and best coaches. Former Heisman Trophy winners such as George Rogers, Earl Campbell and John David Crow all played in the Gator Bowl, while greats such as Dan Marino, Michael Vick, Thurman Thomas, Larry Csonka and Peyton Manning have added to the game's tradition.

In one of its great games, Auburn defeated an Archie Manning-led Ole Miss team, 38-28 in 1971. Two-time All-American and Heisman Trophy winner Pat Sullivan completed 27 of 43 passes for 351 yards and two touchdowns. But trailing 21-0, Archie Manning mounted a near-comeback. Playing with a cast on his

broken left forearm, Manning threw for 180 yards on 19-for-28 passing, ran for 95 yards, threw a 34-yard scoring pass and ran for another score.

The game has changed significantly since those early years. The first game was played in front 7,362 fans and sported a payout of \$20,000. The contest now routinely hosts 80,000 fans and had a payout of \$4.5 million last season.

As the foremost authority on Husker football, *Huskers Illustrated* knows what this game means to the staff, players and fans of Husker Nation. Because of that, we've produced what we believe is one of our best bowl preview issues.

Inside this edition (which proudly kicks off our 29th year of publication), we've included a preview on the Clemson Tigers, provided you with insight on the top spots to visit in Jacksonville and revisited the painful 1982 Orange Bowl, which could have given the Tom Osborne his first national title.

You'll also notice a different twist to our cover as we enlisted noted cartoonist Dayne Dudley to illustrate this cover. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. As always, we welcome your feedback. Happy Holidays! **N**

Send us your comments or story ideas to huskersillustrated@gmail.com.

EDITOR,
GENERAL MANAGER
Aaron Babcock

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Mike Babcock

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Terry Douglass, Bob Hamar, Curt McKeever,
Steve Sipple, Brian Rosenthal, Rick Shaw,
Sean Stevens, Tommy Dahlk, Tony Boone

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Scott Bruhn, NU Sports Information,
Randy Hampton of Digital Camera
Workshop, Rivals.com

SPORTS MARKETING
& ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Tim Francis
(800) 524-9527, ext. 111

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR
G Associates, Inc.

Huskers Illustrated (ISSN 0279-3474) is published monthly January through May and August, bi-monthly June/July and weekly September through mid-December, except open football dates. Single issue cost \$3.95 (yearbook \$9.95); subscription rate for one year (19 issues) is \$51.95. First Class postage is available for an additional charge of \$19 per year. Foreign postage is \$34.

Huskers Illustrated is published by Landmark Community Newspapers, 2623 Regency Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Periodicals postage paid at Lexington, KY, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Huskers Illustrated*, 7755 S. 23rd St., Lincoln, NE 68512.

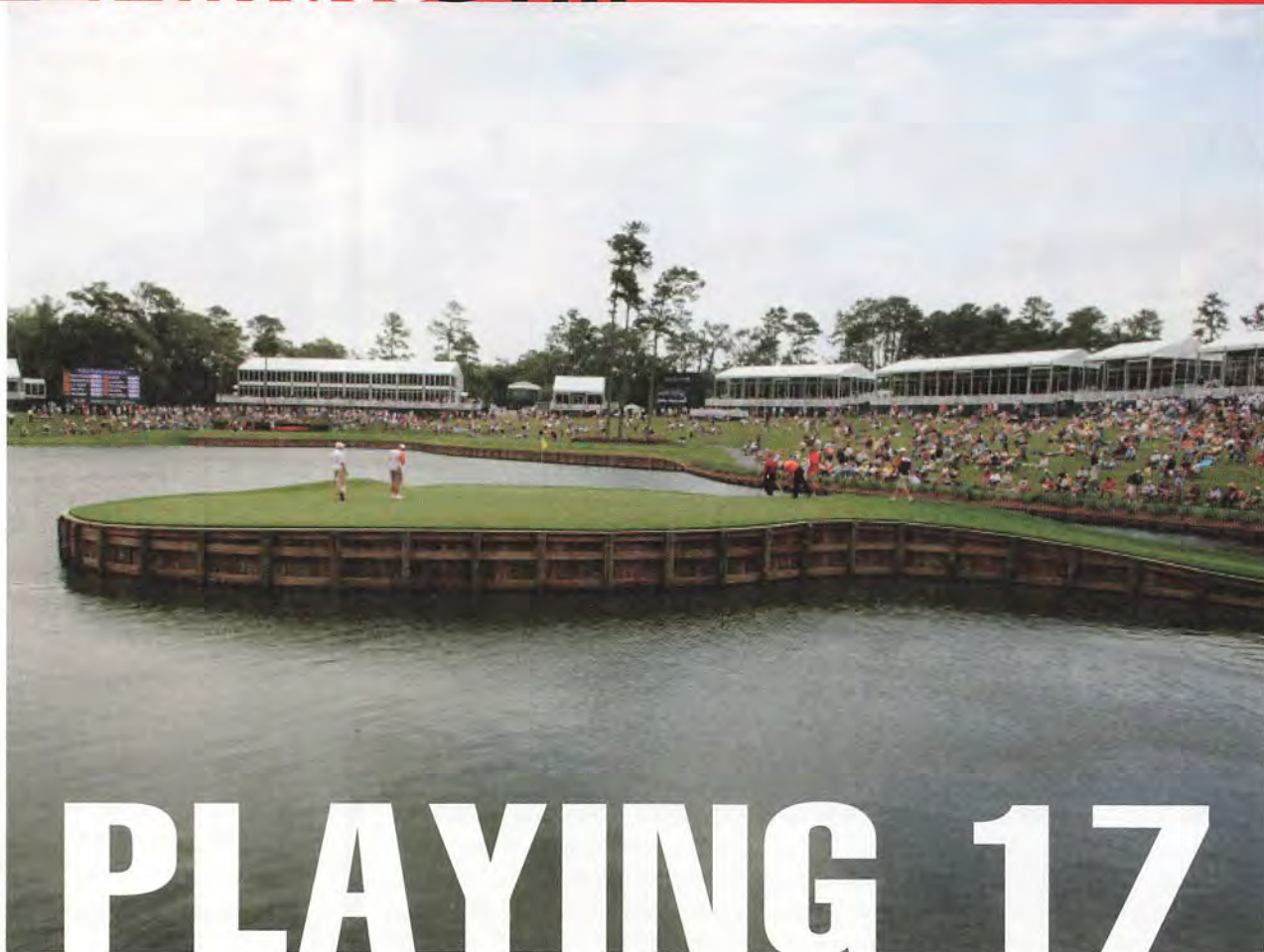
Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome, but will not be acknowledged or returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material.

For subscription inquiries, mail to *Huskers Illustrated*, 2623 Regency Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Allow four to six weeks for response. Give old and new addresses and enclose latest mailing address label when writing about your subscription.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
1-800-524-9527
To subscribe or renew

Huskers Illustrated Online
www.huskersillustrated.com

E-MAIL ADDRESSES
Editorial: huskersillustrated@gmail.com
Advertising: tfrancis@lcni.com



PLAYING 17

The subject wasn't just football and a bowl game, it was golf. **JOE GANZ** said he intended to take along golf clubs when the Cornhuskers head to Jacksonville, Fla., on the day after Christmas to begin on-site Gator Bowl preparations.

"Absolutely," the senior quarterback said. "If we're not allowed, we're sneaking them on. We're taking our charter flight, so we'd better be able to bring them."

And once there, well, team headquarters is the Sawgrass Marriott Resort.

"I'll probably sneak out, late at night, and try to play No. 17," said Ganz.

The signature hole on the TPC Sawgrass course, with the "Island Green," is the 132-yard No. 17.

Not that golf will be foremost on his mind. Ganz is so focused on Nebraska's bowl game that even when the team went through shortened workouts, primarily for

conditioning, the week after the Colorado game, he wouldn't give up reps to the younger quarterbacks.

The coaches would have allowed it. But "I won't let them," Ganz said. "I won't let them take any away from me. I'm selfish. I don't want to be rusty. I don't want to come back next week (when practice began in earnest) and be rusty and have my timing off."

"I don't want anything to interfere with everything we've worked up to at this point."

What the Cornhuskers have worked up to is a New Year's Day bowl game, and one to which they've never gone, matched against a program they've played only once.

Nebraska lost to Clemson in the 1982 Orange Bowl game, 22-15.

In addition to reflecting on the season's success and helping to sell recruits with the national exposure, playing in a bowl game provides additional practice time.

That practice time is especially valuable for

those who have redshirted this season. "It'll be like another spring ball for them," coach **BO PELINI** said. The opportunity is "huge. That's an important time for them. It's an important time for all of us to continue to develop."

Playing in a New Year's Day bowl game is "really special," said Ganz. "It is, just to get everything back to the way it should be, just having Coach Pelini come back and kind of restore the tradition. In his first year, to help them get to a Jan. 1 bowl game, it's really big."

"It's really big for all the seniors and everybody else on the team. It's a great honor."

And if the opportunity arises, it would be fun to play a little golf.

"We'll see if we can get ourselves into a little trouble down there," Ganz said.

He was speaking of trouble figuratively, referring to the TPC golf course. "If the TPC thinks they can keep us off, they've got another think coming," he said.

2MinuteDrill



CATCHING ON: Seniors **NATE SWIFT** and **TODD PETERSON** have been quarterback **JOE GANZ**'s primary receivers this season, no surprise there. But **MIKE MCNEILL** has shown he can catch the ball, too. The sophomore tight end has 29 receptions for 415 yards and six touchdowns. He ranks third in receptions and second in touchdowns, and he's in position to tie or break records in those categories for tight ends.

JUNIOR MILLER (1979), **TODD MILLIKAN** (1988), **JOHNNY MITCHELL** (1990) and **GERALD ARMSTRONG** (1992) share the record for touchdown catches, with seven, while Mitchell holds the record for single-season catches by a tight end, with 31 (for 534 yards) as a sophomore in 1991.

Miller holds the single-season receiving-yards record, with 560 (on 30 catches), in 1978.

"If I were a young tight end, I'd want to play in this offense because tight ends are in the primary progression 90 to 95 percent of the time," offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** said.

"So they're going to have tremendous opportunities to get touches."

ALL-BIG 12

That junior defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH** would earn first-team All-Big 12 recognition should come as no surprise. After all, he led conference defensive linemen in tackles per game, averaging 5.7. He was credited with 68 total, including 15 losses and 5.5 quarterback sacks.

The Associated Press rewarded those efforts by including him on its first team. The conference coaches, however, voted him to the second team, behind Oklahoma's Gerald McCoy, Texas's Roy Miller and Missouri's Ziggy Hood, none of whom earned first-team honors from the 20 AP reporters who voted. In fact, Suh was the only interior lineman on the AP's top defense.

Senior offensive guard **MATT SLAUSON** and sophomore place-kicker **ALEX HENERY**

were second-team selections by the AP. Slauson also made the coaches' second team, while junior safety Larry Asante, senior wide receiver Nate Swift (all-purpose), senior offensive tackle Lydon Murtha and senior defensive end Zach Potter earned AP honorable mention, and Asante, Henery, Potter, Swift (punt return-wide receiver), sophomore I-back Roy Helu, Jr., senior defensive tackle Ty Steinkuhler and junior center Jacob Hickman received honorable mention from the conference coaches.

The week after the Colorado game Suh reiterated his intention of returning to Nebraska for his senior season, though he told the Lincoln Journal Star that he would file the necessary paperwork with the NFL to determine his potential draft status, to "see what I have to get better at."

SIDELINES



WE'RE ON ITUNES

The new Huskers Illustrated Radio Show, sponsored by the Nebraska Lottery, is now available as a podcast on Apple's iTunes Store.

Husker fans can now download the weekly show to their MP3 player and take it with them.

The show, hosted by Chris Schmidt features notable guests from around the country and provides recruiting updates and pre-game analysis. The show can also be heard for free at HuskersIllustrated.com.

HUSKER BOWLS BY NUMBER OF APPEARANCES

Orange	17
Fiesta	6
Cotton	4
Sugar	4
Alamo	3
Rose	2
Sun	2
Bluebonnet	1
Citrus	1
Gotham	1
Holiday	1
Independence	1
Liberty	1

2MinuteDrill

HUSKER BOWL HISTORY

The Huskers are 22-22 in their 44 bowl appearances, including an 8-4 mark in their last 12 postseason contests. Nebraska's first bowl appearance dates back 66 years to the 1941 Rose Bowl.

YEAR	BOWL	OPP	RESULT
1941	Rose	Stanford	L, 21-13
1955	Orange	Duke	L, 34-7
1962	Gotham	Miami	W, 36-34
1964	Orange	Auburn	W, 13-7
1965	Cotton	Arkansas	L, 10-7
1966	Orange	Alabama	L, 39-28
1967	Sugar	Alabama	L, 34-7
1969	Sun	Georgia	W, 45-6
1971	Orange	LSU	W, 17-12
1972	Orange	Alabama	W, 38-6
1973	Orange	Notre Dame	W, 40-6
1974	Cotton	Texas	W, 19-3
1974	Sugar	Florida State	W, 13-10
1975	Fiesta	Arizona State	L, 17-14
1976	Bluebonnet	Texas Tech	W, 27-24
1977	Liberty	North Carolina	W, 21-17
1979	Orange	Oklahoma	L, 31-24
1980	Cotton	Houston	L, 17-14
1980	Sun	Mississippi State	W, 31-17
1982	Orange	Clemson	L, 22-15
1983	Orange	LSU	W, 21-20
1984	Orange	Miami	L, 31-30
1985	Sugar	LSU	W, 28-10
1986	Fiesta	Michigan	L, 27-23
1987	Sugar	LSU	W, 30-15
1988	Fiesta	Florida State	L, 31-28
1989	Orange	Miami	L, 23-3
1990	Fiesta	Florida State	L, 41-17
1991	Citrus	Georgia Tech	L, 45-21
1992	Orange	Miami	L, 22-0
1993	Orange	Florida State	L, 27-14
1994	Orange	Florida State	L, 18-16
1995	Orange	Miami	W, 24-17
1996	Fiesta	Florida	W, 62-24
1996	Orange	Virginia Tech	W, 41-21
1998	Orange	Tennessee	W, 42-17
1998	Holiday	Arizona	L, 23-20
2000	Fiesta	Tennessee	W, 31-21
2000	Alamo	Northwestern	W, 66-17
2002	Rose	Miami	L, 37-14
2002	Independence	Mississippi	L, 27-23
2003	Alamo	Michigan State	W, 17-3
2005	Alamo	Michigan	W, 32-28
2007	Cotton	Auburn	L, 17-14

HI BOWL PREDICTIONS



AARON BABCOCK, Editor

Season: (45-13)

While Clemson's defensive numbers are impressive, they have been piled up against lackluster ACC offenses. The Huskers will follow their game plan for success by controlling the clock. Defensively Nebraska should have success against an offensive line that gave up 29 sacks this season.

NEBRASKA 37, CLEMSON 24



MIKE BABCOCK, Contributing Editor

Season: (48-11)

Clemson's offense will be hard-pressed to control the ball and keep its defense off the field. And if given enough opportunities, the Cornhuskers will put points on the board even against a quality defense such as the one they'll face in Jacksonville.

NEBRASKA 38, CLEMSON 16



TERRY DOUGLASS, Grand Island Indep.

Season: (48-11)

The best units for each team will be going head to head as Nebraska ranks No. 12 in the country in total offense and Clemson is 10th in the nation in scoring defense. The Cornhuskers' defense will need to shut down the Tigers' running back tandem of James Davis and C.J. Spiller and win the turnover battle to prevail.

NEBRASKA 27, CLEMSON 24



MATT DAVISON, Husker Sports Network

Season: (49-10)

I hope our fans don't underestimate our opponent in the Gator Bowl, because of their 7-5 record. Clemson is a very talented team and has excitement in their program right now with the appointment of their new head coach, Dabo Swinney. This will be a great challenge on New Year's Day, and an impressive win should the Huskers prevail.

NEBRASKA 31, CLEMSON 28



SEAN CALLAHAN, HuskersIllustrated.com

Season: (45-9)

Clemson will have as good of a defense as Nebraska has seen this year. I expect a low scoring game, hard fought game, but in the end I see Joe Ganz and NU's playmakers stepping up to pull out the win.

NEBRASKA 27, CLEMSON 21.

NEBRASKA vs. CLEMSON



JANUARY 1, 2009
HUSKERS GO BOWLING FOR A TIGER TROPHY AS LONG-SUFFERING FANS GET BACK ON THE POST-SEASON BANDWAGON!

2MinuteDrill



LATE-SEASON RUSH

The Cornhuskers rushed for an average of 135.3 yards per game in the first half of the season and 211.7 yards per game in the second half of the season, a 56-percent improvement.

I-back **ROY HELU, JR.**, played an important role in that improvement. In the final four games, the sophomore I-back from Danville, Calif., carried 70 times for 510 yards (7.3/ carry) and five touchdowns. He rushed for a career-high 166 yards in the 40-31 victory against Colorado.

"He got nicked up there for a couple of weeks earlier in the season," coach **BO PELINI** said prior to the Colorado game. "I think he's healthy now. His legs are fresh, and he's a good player.

"He hits the hole hard. He just brings a lot to the offensive side of the ball. He can catch out of the backfield. He really is decisive — he gets north-south in a hurry and makes quick

decisions and runs pretty physical for a guy his size. I just think he's a good all-around back."

Actually, the 6-0, 215-pound Helu played against Colorado, his only start, with the pain of a hip pointer. He goes into the Gator Bowl game as the Cornhuskers' leading rusher, 804 yards and seven touchdowns on 114 carries. He rushed for 209 yards last season as a true freshman.

Top rushing totals for Cornhusker sophomores

Player (Year)	Att-Yards (Avg), TDs (Gms)
Lawrence Phillips (1994)	286-1,722 (6.00), 16 (12)
Bobby Reynolds (1950)	193-1,342 (6.95), 19 (9)
Derek Brown (1991)	230-1,313 (5.71), 14 (11)
I.M. Hipp (1977)	197-1,301 (6.60), 10 (11)
Calvin Jones (1992)	168-1,210 (7.20), 14 (11)
Doug DuBose (1984)	156-1,040 (6.67), 8 (11)
Tony Davis (1973)	254-1,008 (3.94), 13 (11)
Rick Berns (1976)	182-972 (5.34), 11 (12)
Mike Rozier (1981)	151-943 (6.25), 5 (11)
Ahman Green (1996)	155-917 (5.92), 7 (10)

SIDELINES



NOT HIS FIRST BOWL GAME

BO PELINI's bowl record as a head coach is 1-0, of course. He served as Nebraska's interim head coach for the 17-3, Alamo Bowl-game victory against Michigan State in 2003.

The Cornhusker defense limited the Spartans to 174 yards of offense, more than 200 below their average. The three points are the fewest ever allowed by Nebraska in a bowl game.

The Blackshirts registered five sacks, including two each for **DEMORRIO WILLIAMS** and **TREVOR JOHNSON**, and intercepted three passes, while I-back **CORY ROSS** and quarterback **JAMMAL LORD** led the offense. Ross carried 37 times for 138 yards and both touchdowns, while Lord completed 8-of-17 passes for 160 yards to earn Offensive MVP honors.

AT THE POLLS

Nebraska received five votes in the final regular-season coaches' poll, published by *USA Today*. Sixty-one coaches vote in the poll, including the Cornhuskers' **BO PELINI**, who placed his team at No. 22. Texas Tech coach Mike Leach voted Nebraska No. 25.



"LIVE"
Weekdays
3-6 p.m.

LINCOLN'S
ESPN
RADIO 1480

2MinuteDrill

IT'S ACADEMIC: Peterson, Wortman honored

TODD PETERSON is planning for a career in chiropractics. **TYLER WORTMAN** isn't sure about his future. "I'm kind of split between aerospace and bio-medical engineering," he said recently.

Wortman's major is mechanical engineering, "a really broad field," he said.

His cumulative grade-point average is 3.96. He has earned A's in every class except one during his time at Nebraska. He received a B-plus in engineering measurements.

Peterson's GPA is similarly lofty, 3.76 in nutritional science and dietetics.

Because of such success in the classroom, Wortman and Peterson both earned second-team Academic All-America recognition, increasing Nebraska's nation-leading total to 96 football Academic All-America honorees all-time. Notre Dame is second on the list with 52.

The Academic All-America program was established by the College Sports

Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) in 1952. *ESPN the Magazine* currently sponsors the team.

Peterson, a wide receiver and just the eighth player in school history to earn academic all-conference recognition four times, will graduate in December, while Wortman, a linebacker and two-time Academic All-Big 12 honoree, is slated to graduate in May.

Both walked on, of course, from Grand Island (Neb.) Central Catholic High School and earned scholarships, though Wortman will finish before going on football scholarship for the spring semester. His schooling has been paid for, however, with Regents and Peter Kiewit academic scholarships. So "I had no problem not being on athletic scholarship," said Wortman.

Peterson also received academic scholarship aid before earning a football scholarship.

Because of his interest in aerospace engineering, Wortman considered

schools such as Southern California, St. Louis, Purdue and Oklahoma. But the opportunity to walk on and play football at Nebraska was a bigger draw than a school offering aerospace engineering.

Besides, "mechanical engineering is a really broad field, so I could still go into aerospace for grad school," Wortman said. "There are classes that apply to it I can take.

"I wasn't able to go directly into that field walking on here, but I'm still on that path. It's just taking longer. But this is obviously . . . playing for Nebraska is well worth that sacrifice."

His interest is the design aspect of aerospace engineering, and if not that, designing bio-medical devices, "surgical tools, stuff like that," he said. "I've always been kind of a math and science type of guy and then also design, critical thinking, brainstorming different things.

"I'm not much of a speaker, so the math and science stuff has always been my gig."

NEBRASKA'S FOOTBALL ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICANS



TODD PETERSON



TYLER WORTMAN

[FIRST TEAM]

Bob Oberlin, C, 1953
 *Don Fricke, C, 1960
 *Pat Clare, HB, 1960
 Jim Hoge, E, 1962
 Dennis Claridge, QB, 1963
 *Jim Osberg, OG, 1965
 *Tony Jeter, E, 1965
 Marvin Mueller, DB, 1966
 Randy Reeves, DB, 1969
 Jeff Kinney, HB, 1971
 Larry Jacobson, DT, 1971
 Frosty Anderson, SE, 1973
 Rik Bonness, C, 1975
 Tom Heiser, WB, 1975
 Vince Ferragamo, QB, 1976
Ted Harvey, DB, 1976-77
 Jim Pillen, DB, 1978
 George Andrews, DE, 1978
 Rod Horn, DT, 1979
Randy Theiss, OT, 1981
Dave Rimington, C, 1981-82
Scott Strasburger, DE, 1983-84
Rob Stuckey, 1983-84
 Mark Traynowicz, OL, 1984
 Dale Klein, PK, 1986
 Tom Welter, OL, 1986
 Jeff Jamrog, DE, 1987

Mark Blazek, DB, 1987-88
 John Kroeker, P, 1988
 Gerry Gdowski, QB, 1989
Jake Young, C, 1989
 David Edeal, C, 1990
Pat Tyrance, LB, 1990
 Jim Wanek, OG, 1990
Pat Engelbert, MG, 1991
Mike Stigge, P, 1991-92
 Trev Alberts, OLB, 1993
Terry Connealy, NT, 1993-94
Rob Zatechka, OT, 1993-94
 Matt Shaw, TE, 1994
Aaron Graham, C, 1995
Grant Wistrom, RE, 1996-97
Joel Makovicka, FB, 1997-98
Chad Kelsay, RE, 1998
 Bill Lafleur, P, 1998
 Mike Brown, DB, 1999
Kyle Vanden Bosch, RE, 1999-2000
 Tracey Wistrom, TE, 2001
 Chad Sievers, LB, 2004
 Kurt Mann, C, 2005
Dane Todd, FB, 2005

[SECOND TEAM]

Bill Kosch, S, 1970-71
 Dave Walline, DT, 1970
 Dick Rupert, OG, 1971
 Ritch Bahe, WB, 1973
 Stan Waldemore, OT, 1977

Randy Theiss, OT, 1982
 Kris Van Norman, S, 1982
 Bill Weber, DE, 1982
 Micah Heibel, FB, 1987
 Jon Nelson, OL, 1988
Jake Young, C, 1988
Pat Tyrance, LB, 1989
Pat Engelbert, MB, 1990
Rob Zatechka, OT, 1992
 Ken Mehlin, OG, 1993
Aaron Graham, C, 1994
 Brian Schuster, FB, 1995
 Steve Ott, OG, 1995
 Steve Volin, OT, 1995
 Jon Hesse, LB, 1996
 Scott Frost, QB, 1997
Chad Kelsay, DE, 1997
 Jon Zatechka, OG, 1997
Brian Shaw, LB, 1998-99
 Judd Davies, FB, 2003
 Pat Ricketts, CB, 2003
 Kellen Huston, DB, 2004
Dane Todd, FB, 2006
 Todd Peterson, WR, 2008
 Tyler Wortman, LB, 2008

[THIRD TEAM]

John Adkins, DE, 1970

(*selection by other groups,
boldface: two-time, #three-time)

2MinuteDrill

HOMETOWN HEROES



N

Luke Lingenfelter - Plainview, NE



Luke Lingenfelter didn't make the travel roster this football season. So when the Cornhuskers went on the road, he would head home as soon as his last class on Friday was finished, in the late morning. When he got to Plainview, he wouldn't stop in town

but rather would go straight to the farm, to help his dad. He'd climb on a combine and spend the rest of the day there, "usually until the dew settles on the corn and it's too hard to combine," he said. Then he'd go home, get some sleep, wake up early and work in the field all day before heading back to Lincoln late Saturday night.

That's how he relaxed. "Farming is kind of a break for me, a slower pace than down here," he said. "I don't know if that makes any sense. You're kind of alone, isolated."

Given a choice, farming eventually will be more than relaxation. It will be his vocation. And if he can use a degree in biological systems engineering, so much the better. "Basically, my dad's not going to pay for a business degree. He wants me to get a really good degree while I'm down here, maybe use it for a few years," said Lingenfelter, who carries a 3.455 cumulative grade-point average.

"But what I want to do is go back and help my dad farm."

When he walked on at Nebraska, following in the footsteps of cousin, Newt Lingenfelter, uncles Bob Lingenfelter and Bruce Lingenfelter and grandfather Mike Lingenfelter ("I don't think he ever finished it out"), "that's about the extent of what I planned on doing," Luke said. **N**

LUKE LINGENFELTER

6-4, 255, Redshirted Freshman,
Defensive end

Hometown: Plainview, Neb.

County: Pierce

Population: 1,213

Distance from Lincoln: 170 miles

Plainview Facts: The northeast Nebraska community proclaims itself the "Klown Kapital" of the world and has the Klown Doll Museum. It also has an original Carnegie Library, dedicated in 1917. According to Perkey's Nebraska Place Names (1982), Plainview originally was named Roseville after the first postmaster, Charles Rose, but the name was changed in January 1874 because "some resentful settlers felt Roseville gave too much prominence to one family."

Nebraska football lettermen:

Newt Lingenfelter, OL (2005)
Tim Demerath, S (2001)
Tim McCrady, WB (1978-80)
Bob Lingenfelter, OT (1974-76)

SIDELINES



SURPRISE FIND

Now isn't the time to reflect on his career at Nebraska. Senior quarterback **JOE GANZ** has the Gator Bowl game still to play, and "you can't let your foot off the gas pedal at all," he said in early December. "You can't take a breath at all. You've just got to keep continuing to get better."

This has been a record-setting season for him, however, which prompted a question about which of the records he's broken has been the most surprising to him. The Cornhuskers' single-season record for total offense, previously held by good friend **ZAC TAYLOR**, Ganz replied.

Taylor accounted for 3,194 yards of offense in 2006, to earn Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year recognition. Ganz has 3,589 yard of offense going into the Clemson game.

"I didn't know that Zac had it. I thought sure it was going to be like 5,000 (yards)," he said. "Some of the guys like (Tommy) Frazier and all those guys, rushing for however many yards they did and throwing. So I thought for sure it would be higher than that."

"I thought for sure I wouldn't have a shot at that because I didn't know that slow-foot Zac had his record. I thought for sure it was somebody with some speed."



THE BIG 12 BEAT

BY CURT MCKEEVER

Breaking down the Big 12 Bowls

By the slimmest of margins (OK, so it was the second-closest finish in Bowl Championship Series history), Florida edged Texas by .0181 of a point for the No. 2 spot in the BCS rankings and opportunity to face Oklahoma in the national championship game on Jan. 8.

For sure, the contest is huge to the Big 12's season-long contention that it's got the nation's best collection of teams.

Of course, just how far the league's brass are sticking out their chests on Jan. 8 will come down to how the six other bowl-bound teams fare.

A peep into those pairings follows, but first more on how the coaches tried to settle the argument of who should be playing in the BCS championship:

Their pre-bowl ballots are the only ones during the season that are made public, and it's probably safe to say you won't be surprised by how most voted.

For instance, Colorado's Dan Hawkins, Iowa State's Gene Chizek, Missouri's Gary Pinkel and Nebraska's Bo Pelini all had Oklahoma and Texas 1-2 on their final ballot, hoping to set up an all Big 12 title game. All but Chizek had the Sooners No. 1 and Texas No. 2 (Chizek, who used to be defensive coordinator at Texas, reversed that order).

Texas Tech's Mike Leach had OU No. 1, the Red Raiders No. 2 and Texas No. 5. Baylor's Art Briles had OU No. 1 and Texas No. 5 (he and Leach were two of the four who placed the Longhorns in their lowest spot). The only Big 12 coach not to rank a conference team No. 1 was Texas' Mack Brown, who chose Florida, but also had the Longhorns ahead of the Sooners.

The three coaches who faced both Oklahoma and Texas this season – Briles, Leach and Pinkel – voted the Sooners higher.

Alamo Bowl, Dec. 29, San Antonio

Missouri (9-4) vs. Northwestern (9-3)

Will there be mudslinging between these two journalism school giants? A win would give the Tigers 10 wins in back-to-back seasons for the first time. This will be the last game for Dave Christenson as the Tigers' offensive coordinator. He's headed to take over at Wyoming.

Holiday Bowl, Dec. 30, San Diego

Oklahoma State (9-3) vs. Oregon (9-3)

Looking for a bowl featuring stout defense? This probably isn't your game. The Cowboys are seventh in total offense and eighth in scoring offense. The Ducks are seventh in scoring offense, eighth in total offense.

OSU's Mike Gundy is the first who played in this game to coach in it. In 1988, he and Barry Sanders led the Cowboys to a 62-14 win against Wyoming.

Insight Bowl, Dec. 31, Tempe, Ariz.

Kansas (7-5) vs. Minnesota (7-5)

Two teams looking for some salvation. The Jayhawks avoided going 1-5 down the stretch by upsetting Missouri in the regular-season finale. Minnesota, 1-11 last year, was 7-1 this season before losing their last four.

Gator Bowl, Jan. 1, Jacksonville, Fla.

Nebraska (8-4) vs. Clemson (7-5)

The Huskers are obviously ecstatic about squeaking one out against Colorado and playing in their first Gator after missing out on a bowl last season. The Tigers are ecstatic to be in any bowl after sitting 3-4 following an Oct. 18 loss to Georgia Tech. But this will be their ninth Gator, the most for any team.

Cotton Bowl, Jan. 1, Dallas

Texas Tech (11-1) vs. Mississippi (8-4)

Last Cotton in the old stadium on the Texas State Fairgrounds. Next year, the event moves to the Dallas Cowboys state-of-the-art complex in Arlington.

Tech will be trying to win 12 games for the first time. Maybe the Red Raiders can pretend they're playing Texas again. Ole Miss quarterback Jevan Snead was a Longhorn before he transferred after playing the 2006 season as McCoy's backup.

Fiesta Bowl, Jan. 5, Glendale, Ariz.

Texas (11-1) vs. Ohio State (10-2)

The Longhorns want a better result than what Michigan got in 2006 after Florida edged it by 0.0101 point for a spot in the BCS championship. The Wolverines then lost to USC in the Rose.

Ohio State will be playing in its fourth straight BCS bowl. The last time these teams squared off, McCoy was a freshman. The Buckeyes are now led by freshman Terrelle Pryor.

BCS National Championship, Jan. 8, Miami

Oklahoma (12-1) vs. Florida (12-1)

If you're wondering how good Bradford is, where might he be today had Rhett Bomar not been dismissed prior to the 2006 season for reportedly violating NCAA rules by receiving payments for a summer job he never worked? Bomar had been the MVP of the 2005 Holiday Bowl, and would have been hard to unseat.

The Sooners lead the nation in scoring after topping 60 points in an NCAA record five straight games. Florida is No. 3, and out for its second national crown in three years. OU has lost four straight BCS bowls, including national title games in 2003 and 2004.



Patrick Witt

6-4, 225, Redshirted Freshman, QB, Wylie, Texas

HI: Peyton Manning, Tom Brady or Brett Favre?

WITT: I'm a huge Brady fan. I really respect him. I just think he's a great player, everything he went through at Michigan. He got his number called when (Drew) Bledsoe went down and never looked back from there. I really enjoy watching him play . . . great job of managing the game, great arm, just kind of the quintessential quarterback.

HI: What's your favorite month of the year and why?

WITT: That's a tough call. I'd probably say September in Georgia. The fall there is really nice, and that's when the leaves start changing. So if I didn't narrow it down to a month, I'd say the fall. It's really special in Georgia. That reminds me of childhood, I guess.

HI: Have you established a pre-game routine?

WITT: I have. We come over on the bus an hour and a half, two hours early. We get taped, head out on the field, get in some throws. I throw with one of our student managers. He runs routes for me. After that come back in, get a little down time, start putting on your stuff, slowly. I don't really like to be rushed, so I just kind of take my time to get things together. I guess it kind of evolves. Every year is a little bit different. I don't have any weird things, like I eat a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich or anything like that. It's just kind of going with the time line, if it's an early or late game.

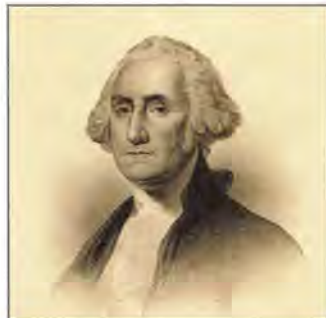


HI: If you could eat only one thing for the next two weeks, what would it be?

WITT: That's a tough call . . . Chipotle, I love Chipotle burritos. I'm eating there all the time. It's probably not a good thing.

HI: What was of most value in redshirting?

WITT: I really think you just get a chance to learn from everyone else. Those guys set an example for you, and you just kind of sit back and watch. I think the learning experience is a lot better because you're not burdened with the pressure of having to perform. I'm glad I did it. I learned a lot.



HI: What's something that very few people know about you?

WITT: My nickname is "the goat." If you came to my house, you'd probably never hear me called Patrick. I'm just "the goat," ever since I was a kid. My parents named me that. It kind of evolved from different things. I ate whatever as a kid. I wasn't picky at all. I'd eat a lot.

HI: What's the best book you've read recently?

WITT: His Excellency: George Washington, a biography of George Washington. I'm a big history buff, so I enjoyed that a lot.

HI: Did you pick a No. 2 jersey?

WITT: I didn't. I was No. 11 in high school, kind of No. 11 my whole life. It was one of those deals where I had committed and Curenski (Gilleylen) had committed, and I guess he got promised the number. It's not a big deal. It's just a number. I've kind of come to like No. 2 a lot, so I'll stick with it.

HI: What do you have on your iPod?

WITT: My two favorite artists right now, probably Hootie and the Blowfish and Third-Eye Blind, and some Jack's Mannequin. I love Third Eye Blind; that's probably my favorite band. And then I've got a bunch of country, too. I'm a Southern boy, so I've got to have country.

HI: What's your most embarrassing moment on a football field?

WITT: I've had quite a few. I'm not too proud to admit that. I got intercepted one time, got hit as I was trying to throw, and it got picked off. I was trying to chase the guy down. He cut back on me, and I just got cleaned out by somebody out of nowhere, got knocked about 5 yards out of bounds. It was bad. That was pretty embarrassing, adding insult to injury. It wasn't a fun experience.



Kim Schellpeper

Academic counselor at home with NU



When Kim Schellpeper came to Nebraska from Omaha Central High School 13 years ago, she didn't necessarily plan on staying.

But she remains in Lincoln to this day, working as the Husker athletic department's associate director of academic programs. She was promoted to her current position in August of 2007.

"It was a very difficult decision to leave Omaha Central 13 years ago," Schellpeper says. "In fact, I have many great memories from my time at Central and I loved teaching there."

A native of Stanton, Neb., Schellpeper worked at Central as a reading specialist and social studies instructor.

"It's kind of funny, but my decision

to apply for a position working on the academic staff at Nebraska had nothing to do with athletics," she notes. "Instead, I wanted to return to the University of Nebraska to complete a master's degree and thought it would be easier if I worked on campus. My plan was to complete my master's and return to Omaha Public Schools to resume my teaching career."

"I'm proud to say that I finished my Master's in Education in August of 2000, but by that time UNL had become my home. I love the atmosphere at Nebraska and being on a college campus."

Schellpeper has served as an academic counselor and coordinator of learning development programs for more than a

decade, with her responsibilities including the administration and evaluation of the tutorial program, the mentoring program and learning assessments. She also serves as the liaison to the Office for Students with Disabilities.

She is the academic counselor for the sport of softball and one of several individuals who work with the football program. In her role as coordinator of learning programs, she also works with students from virtually all of the Huskers' sports.

In addition to her master's degree, Schellpeper earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1981.

Catching up with BY MIKE BABCOCK

Jim Wanek

No choice but Nebraska for small-town fan

There was little doubt Jim Wanek would play football for Nebraska, given the opportunity. That was his goal from an early age.

He grew up in Aurora, Neb. And he knew all about Cornhusker football. He regularly watched the weekly recap show on NETV, featuring host Don Gill, Nebraska assistant coach John Melton and a couple of players. And he read newspaper sports sections.

"In junior high and high school, I'd always look at the rankings and the standings, read the interviews," said Wanek. "I was a fan long before I was a player."

Cornhusker assistants Milt Tenopir and Cletus Fischer were both from small Nebraska towns not all that far from Aurora, Harvard and St. Edward. And coach Tom Osborne was from Hastings, of course. "You knew their history and where they were from," Wanek said. "And you kind of got a

sense of what their personality was like."

Iowa and Wyoming recruited him, but when Nebraska offered a scholarship, his recruitment was over. "I was a classic (Nebraska) kid," he said.

Because he knew something about the coaches before he ever got to Nebraska, "going in, I had a lot of respect for the coaching staff," said Wanek, who began his career as a center on the freshman team. He moved to guard and then to middle guard on defense during the spring of his redshirt year, moving back to offense just before the opening game against Texas A&M in the Kickoff Classic his sophomore season.

He backed up Andy Keeler that season then started for two seasons. He was a co-captain as a senior, and a two-time Academic All-Big Eight honoree.

His career followed a common pattern, particularly for offensive linemen. "You

JIM WANEK

LETTERS: 1988-90

POSITION: Offensive Guard

CURRENT: Divisional sales manager, MetLife, Urbandale, Iowa

WIFE: Annette

CHILDREN: Katherine (13), Tommy (11), Anna (9), Jimmy (4)

were going to play on the freshman team. You were going to redshirt. You were going to, hopefully, make the travel roster your sophomore year. And then, hopefully, you'd put yourself in position by the time you were a junior or senior to start," he said.

"That was kind of the mentality back then."



Heading down the home stretch

BY RICK SHAW

If things continue to move as quickly as they have in recent weeks, the Nebraska football coaches may be able to finish off their 2009 recruiting efforts before the end of December. Since Thanksgiving, four senior athletes have delivered their pledges to the Husker staff while one prospect for the class of 2010 also announced his commitment to the Big Red.

With the new additions, the Nebraska 2009 class stands at 19 commitments. The Huskers are expected to sign between 23 and 25 prospects in the first week of February.

Four-star safety prospect **DIJON WASHINGTON** announced his intentions of signing with Nebraska in late November, after considering scholarship offers from Oregon State, San Diego State, Washington and Washington State. Rated as the nation's No. 15 safety prospect by Rivals.com, the 6-0, 173-pound athlete out of Lawndale, Calif., (Leuzinger HS) said he had a good feeling about Nebraska after taking his official visit to Lincoln in early October.

"After the visit, I knew I liked Nebraska, but my mom and dad were still getting more familiar with it," Washington said. "They've grown to like it, so I thought it would be the best place for me to play next year."

Lawndale missed the playoffs this season, ending their fall slate with a 6-4 record. Washington, however, had a strong senior year in the defensive backfield, finishing with approximately 70 tackles and two interceptions.

BRANDON KINNIE out of Fort Scott



(Kan.) Community College became the first wide receiver to join the Husker class. The 6-3, 215-pound big-bodied receiver with outstanding speed (4.4-second 40-yard dash) chose Nebraska over offers from Arkansas and Kansas.

"Nebraska set the bar very high on my first visit there," Kinnie said. "I don't feel like anybody can really reach that. Nebraska has been there since day one. They've been genuine from the jump. I really feel Nebraska is the place for me."

"I liked everything about the town when I went up there. Everybody showed a lot of love. Coach (**TED GILMORE**) has shown a lot of love since I met him, we had a good relationship, we bonded real well, he's been real genuine since I met him, really up front about what I needed to do to help the program in a good way."

Rated the nation's No. 79 junior college prospect by Rivals (three-stars), Kinnie

recorded 56 catches for 815 yards and 10 scores in the first 10 games of the season. He'll graduate from Fort Scott in May with three years of eligibility remaining.

After being committed to the University of Kansas for several months, defensive end **KEVIN YOUNG** decided to take an official visit to Nebraska to watch the Huskers battle Colorado on the day after Thanksgiving. The 6-4, 227-pound prospect out of Olathe (Kan.) North was so impressed with the trip, he changed his pledge over to the Big Red soon after arriving back home.

"It was just kind of an all of a sudden deal," Young said about the trip. "I had no intention to go up there and committing. I went up there, and I was like man, it blew me away. This is where I wanted to be, so I committed there."

"I spent a lot of time with my position coach, coach (**JOHN PAPUCHIS** and **CARL PELINI**)," he said. "I'm a December graduate, so there is a lot of opportunity for me to go in and play early."

Rated the No. 5 prospect in Kansas by Rivals (three-stars), Young chose Nebraska over offers from Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, UCLA, Washington State and others. As a junior, he earned all-league honors after tallying 80 tackles and 12 sacks.

Speedy cornerback **LAZARRI MIDDLETON** out of Long Beach (Calif.) Poly liked what he was hearing from the NU coaches, so he decided to commit to the Huskers sight-

unseen. The 6-1, 190-pound isn't scheduled to take his first visit to Lincoln until Jan. 12.

"I called (Nebraska defensive backs) coach (**MARVIN SANDERS**)," Middleton said about how he delivered the news. "He was real excited. He was just as excited as I was. We were hollering and screaming on the phone together."

"Me and my family researched like crazy when Nebraska came around. "I already know a lot about them to make an educated decision because we've really looked into Nebraska. We researched my visit there since it was so far away (in January)."

With a 4.48-second clocking in the 40-yard dash, Middleton recorded 44 tackles, eight pass breakups, two forced fumbles and one interception as a senior. He chose the Huskers over offers from SMU and Idaho State.

Though four new athletes were added to the Big Red fold, one previously committed member of the 2009 class, was taken off of the list. **EMERSON EVANS**, a 6-1, 230-pound prospect out of Houston (Texas) Alief Taylor had been committed to Nebraska since July but, due to some uncertainty surrounding his academic standing, was removed from the Husker pledge list in early December. Evans said he still plans to do everything he can to shore things up in the classroom so he can rejoin the class come February.

Nebraska also received their first pledge for the recruiting class of 2010 when Aurora (Neb.) offensive lineman **ANDREW RODRIGUEZ** delivered his commitment to the Husker coaches in late November. Listed

on the 'Rivals250 to Watch for 2010', the 6-6, 298-pound offensive tackle is widely considered the top junior prospect in the state.

"I was just thinking last night, I thought about staying in-state with my family and friends, and I started playing football in Nebraska—so I'm going to stay in Nebraska," Rodriguez said. "The [Nebraska] coaches were excited. I talked to coach (Marvin) Sanders, (Barney) Cotton, and coach (Bo) Pelini. They were all excited and said hopefully I'll be a big part of the team. They were just happy."

Named to the first-team all-state (all class) team by the *Omaha World Herald*, Rodriguez



also received heavy recruiting interest from LSU, Notre Dame, Texas and others.

Nebraska is getting close to solidifying their 2009 recruiting class. With over six weeks remaining until signing day, filling out the last few remaining slots shouldn't be a problem.**N**

COMMITTED



ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

He came to Fort Scott (Kan.) Community College with a goal to be not just a better football player, but a better person all around.

That's exactly what Nebraska wide receiver commit **BRANDON KINNIE** says he's done.

After being the leading receiver in the Jayhawk conference this season, he followed that up with a blocked punt, fumble recovery, and over 200 all-purpose yards in Fort Scott's Heart of Texas Bowl win over Blinn. Now, he's looking forward to his future with the Huskers and the possibility to help out younger players in this 2009 class if he can.

"Coming from junior college, you learn to appreciate things," Kinnie said. "Me coming from here, it will help me appreciate things I'll get at Nebraska and what I'll have to work for. A lot of kids go from high school to D-I don't know how hard it is or the struggle of what a junior college player goes through."

Kinnie says that he keeps up with recruiting and who Nebraska is receiving commitments from. He's looking forward to bringing not just his talent, but experience to the 2009 group.

"I definitely feel like I can be like that to them," he said. "When the younger players get down on themselves, or full of themselves, you can bring them down or bring them up... All we know is hard work here. A lot of guys that have come through here have changed their ways and know how to be an adult and mature so they can get where they want to be."

by John Talman, Recruiting Publisher

HuskersIllustrated.com

Recruiting Notebook

In-home visits underway

by Sean Stevens

Defensive tackle is a big 'need' position for Nebraska in this recruiting cycle, and possibly the top prospect on their board is **LATU HEIMULI** (6-3/297/4-stars) of Salt Lake City, Utah. In fact, the Huskers are so high on Heimuli that he is believed to be head coach **BO PELINI**'s first in-home visit as a head coach.

Heimuli's father Toni was impressed by what he heard from Pelini.

"It was really good," he said. "He was just pointing out the needs of the football team and the academic stuff – how they check on all of the freshman to make sure they're off to a good start, and make sure everybody is going to class ... so it was really good – as far as my point of view.

Heimuli has been rumored to be leaning to Florida; however it appears that the Huskers are in good position according to his father.

"Latu was very excited. He will talk and asks



LATU HEIMULI

questions, but usually when somebody is talking to him, he's just quiet," Mr. Heimuli said. "It's usually until somebody asks him a question, but he was really asking about Nebraska."

2009 Nebraska Commitment List (19)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Nick Ash	OL	6-5	261	Keller, Texas (Keller)
Shawn Bodtmann	OLB	6-0	205	Scranton, Pa. (West Scranton)
DeAndre Byrd	CB	5-10	170	Tallahassee, Fla. (Lincoln)
Jess Coffey	OL	6-7	270	Denton, Texas (Guyer)
Cody Green	QB	6-4	220	Dayton, Texas (Dayton)
Dejon Gomes	DB	6-0	190	San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF)
J.T. Kerr	TE	6-4	230	Corona, Calif. (Scripps Ranch)
Brandon Kinnie	WR	6-3	215	Fort Scott, Kan. (Fort Scott CC)
Taylor Martinez	ATH	6-0	176	Corona, Calif. (Centennial)
Earnest Norman	LB	5-11	220	Euless, Texas (Trinity)
Cole Pensick	DL	6-2	250	Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast)
Brent Qvale	OL	6-7	300	Williston, N.D. (Williston)
Thaddeus Randle	DL	6-1	255	Galena Park, Texas (North Shore)
Dontrayevous Robinson	RB	6-1	215	Euless, Texas (Trinity)
Jeremia Sirles	OL	6-6	280	Lakewood, Colo. (Bear Creek)
Dijon Washington	S	6-0	173	Lawndale, Calif. (Leuzinger)
Chris Williams	LB	6-0	230	Abilene, Texas (Abilene)
Kevin Young	DE	6-4	227	Olathe, Kan. (North)
C.J. Zimmerer	FB	6-0	213	Omaha, Neb. (Omaha Gross)

SIDELINES



MORE VISITS

AL-TEREK MCBURSE

(6-0/192/3-stars) of Winter Springs, Fla. was one of the first prospects to receive a visit from NU running backs coach **TIM BECK**.

"The in-home was really more for my parents," McBurse said. "I pretty much knew everything. It was more for my mom and dad to get their questions answered. They got their answers and now they are more comfortable in me going to school away from home."

Although the speedster admits that the Huskers lead for his commitment, he still plans to see South Florida and Georgia Tech in person before he decides.

"I basically have it in my mind where I want to be. I would say Nebraska is the place to beat. From the time I visited there until now I've felt the same way about them. They set the bar pretty high. I'm very excited about the program and going there would be a great opportunity to take my game to the next level."

McBurse will graduate mid-year and enroll in his school of choice in January.

CELEBRATING
25 YEARS!



25TH GAMES

OF THE CORNHUSKER STATE
— JULY 17-26 —

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR**

**CORNHUSKER
STATE GAMES**

JULY 17-26, 2009

CornhuskerStateGames.com

Swinney rewarded after directing Clemson rebound



BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

CLEMSON SCUFFLED to a 3-3 record in mid-October, falling well short of expectations generated by the Tigers' preseason top 10 ranking in many polls.

Amid plenty of fan agitation, Clemson head coach Tommy Bowden resigned Oct. 13, and receivers coach/assistant head coach Dabo Swinney was promoted to interim head coach.

Earlier this month, during a press conference to announce Clemson's participation in the Jan. 1 Gator Bowl, Swinney recalled the Tigers' resolve during the period immediately following Bowden's resignation.

"We set our goals," Swinney said. "We were fighting and clawing and hoping that we could finish strong and get to a bowl. To have a New Year's Day bowl, that kind of separates us from the pack. We'll prepare very hard."

Swinney, promoted to full-time head coach Dec. 1, has seemingly galvanized the program. Clemson (7-5 overall, 4-4 ACC) enters the Gator Bowl with four wins in its last five games, including a resounding 31-14 triumph over rival South Carolina to finish the regular season.

"It has been incredible. I'm very blessed to have this opportunity," Swinney said. "I'm not sleeping very much right now because I can't. Every day I wake up, I have to pinch myself. I can't wait to get to work and get started. It has definitely been a whirlwind."

Hired by Bowden in 2003 to coach receivers, Swinney was promoted last year to assistant head coach when Alabama head coach Nick Saban attempted to bring



Swinney back to his alma mater, where he lettered three seasons as a walk-on receiver and later served as an assistant coach.

After being named Clemson's interim head coach, Swinney implored his players to "go all in" and encouraged the fan base to embrace the squad despite its lackluster start.

Swinney's positive approach paid off.

The Tigers rank 10th nationally in scoring defense, allowing only 16.6 points per game, and rank 17th in yards allowed (294.8). They are 62nd in scoring offense (25.5) and 81st in yards gained (339.3).

Clemson senior wide receiver Tyler Grisham said Swinney has done a remarkable job leading the team.

"It's a totally different team," Grisham

told *The Greenville (S.C.) News*. "Not only schematically, but physically, emotionally and spiritually we're a different team."

Swinney said he hopes Clemson's success down the stretch portends a program's revitalization under his watch.

"I wholeheartedly believe in the Clemson tradition," Swinney told *The Greenville News*. "The passion of the Clemson family is what makes this one of the very, very best jobs in the country. I believe in my heart we can achieve all our goals as one Clemson."

"My goals are simple: To go recruit the very best student-athletes we can recruit, to graduate them and to win a championship."

GATOR BOWL HISTORY

Clemson will be making its ninth appearance in the Gator Bowl, more than any other program, but its first appearance since Jan. 1, 2001, when the Tigers lost to Virginia Tech 41-20 in a battle of mobile quarterbacks (Clemson's Woody Dantzler and Tech's Michael Vick).

All told, Clemson has a record of 4-4 in the Gator Bowl.

The Tigers' first Gator Bowl appearance occurred at the end of the 1948 season when they defeated Missouri 24-23 to cap an 11-0 season under Frank Howard.

Clemson also participated in Gator Bowls at the end of the 1951, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1989 and 1995 seasons. The Tigers' 1977 appearance marked Danny Ford's first game as their head coach. He took over for Charley Pell, who had resigned at the end of the regular season to become head coach at Florida.

Ford led Clemson to a 22-15 victory over Nebraska in the 1982 Orange Bowl, giving the Tigers a national championship. **N**

CLEMSON QUICK FACTS



Head coach:

Dabo Swinney (4-2 this season, his first as a head coach)

Enrollment: 17,600

Colors: Orange and purple

2008 SCHEDULE

- 8/30 Alabama L, 34-10**
9/6 The Citadel W, 45-17
9/13 North Carolina St. W, 27-9
9/20 South Carolina St. W, 54-0
9/27 Maryland L, 20-17
10/9 at Wake Forest L, 12-7
10/18 Georgia Tech L, 21-17
11/1 at Boston College W, 27-21
11/8 at Florida State L, 41-27
11/15 Duke W, 31-7
11/22 at Virginia W, 13-3
11/29 South Carolina W, 31-14

CLEMSON ROSTER

#	QUARTERBACKS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
3	Willy Korn	QB	6-2	220	*Fr.	RS	Lyman, SC (James F. Byrnes HS)
10	Cullen Harper	QB	6-4	225	*Gr.	2VL	Alpharetta, GA (Sequoyah HS)
12	Brandon Speweik	QB	6-0	205	Sr.	SQ	Oregon, OH (Saint Francis de Sales HS)
16	Michael Wade	QB	6-1	205	*So.	1VL	Greer, SC (Riverside HS)
#	OFFENSIVE LINE	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
52	Charles Roediger	LS	6-0	200	*Sr.	SQ	Advance, NC (Forsyth Country Day School)
64	Wilson Norris	OG	6-4	310	*Fr.	RS	Pickens, SC (Pickens HS)
73	David Smith	OG	6-5	290	*Fr.	RS	Greenville, SC (Greenville HS)
51	Eddie Adams	OG/LS	6-2	295	*Jr.	SQ	Greenwood, SC (Greenwood HS)
53	Preston Stone	OL	6-3	250	Sr.	SQ	Arlington, TX (Arlington Lamar HS)
55	Bobby Hutchinson	OL	6-3	320	*Sr.	2VL	Greenville, FL (Madison County HS)
60	Jamal Medlin	OL	6-5	295	*So.	SQ	Orangeburg, SC (Orangeburg-Wilkinson HS)
62	Mason Cloy	OL	6-3	310	*Fr.	RS	Columbia, SC (Spring Valley HS)
65	Thomas Austin	OL	6-3	315	*Jr.	2VL	Camden, SC (Camden HS)
70	Marcus Grant	OL	6-4	315	*Jr.	2VL	Mullins, SC (Mullins HS)
71	Barry Humphries	OL	6-2	300	*Jr.	2VL	Anderson, SC (Belton-Honea Path HS)
74	Antoine McClain	OL	6-5	325	Fr.	HS	Anniston, AL (Anniston HS)
76	Cory Lambert	OL	6-6	310	*Jr.	2VL	Greenville, SC (Greenville HS)
78	Ben Ramsey	OL	6-4	290	*So.	1VL	Greensboro, NC (Grimsley HS)
61	Chris Hairston	OT	6-6	320	*So.	1VL	Winston-Salem, NC (Carver HS)
72	Landon Walker	OT	6-5	300	*Fr.	RS	North Wilkesboro, NC (East Wilkes HS)
#	RUNNING BACKS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
30	Chad Diehl	FB	6-2	250	*Fr.	RS	Lyman, SC (James F. Byrnes HS)
1	James Davis	RB	5-11	215	Sr.	3VL	Atlanta, GA (Douglass HS)
8	Jamie Harper	RB	5-11	235	Fr.	HS	Jacksonville, FL (Trinity Christian Academy)
28	C.J. Spiller	RB	5-11	195	Jr.	2VL	Lake Butler, FL (Union County HS)
35	Paul Macko	RB	5-10	200	*Gr.	2VL	Wadsworth, OH (Wadsworth HS)
#	RECEIVERS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
82	Durrell Barry	TE	6-4	245	*Jr.	2VL	North Charleston, SC (Fort Dorchester HS)
84	Akeem Robinson	TE	6-4	255	*Gr.	3VL	Miami, FL (Miami Carol City Senior HS)
86	Michael Palmer	TE	6-5	250	Jr.	2VL	Stone Mountain, GA (Parkview HS)
92	Kasey Nobles	TE	6-1	240	*So.	SQ	Lake Butler, FL (Union County HS)
6	Jacoby Ford	WR	5-10	185	Jr.	2VL	Royal Palm Beach, FL (Cardinal Newman HS)
13	Tyler Grisham	WR	5-11	180	Sr.	3VL	Birmingham, AL (Spain Park HS)
16	Kyle Davison	WR	6-1	205	*Sr.	SQ	Alpharetta, GA (Milton HS)
21	Xavier Dye	WR	6-5	210	Sr.	1VL	Greenwood, SC (James F. Byrnes HS)
26	Marquan Jones	WR	5-11	185	Fr.	HS	Columbia, SC (Blythewood HS)
80	Aaron Kelly	WR	6-5	190	*Sr.	3VL	Marietta, GA (Walton HS)
83	Nelson Faerber	WR	5-11	185	*Sr.	2VL	Duluth, GA (Chattahoochee HS)
85	Brandon Clear	WR	6-5	205	*Fr.	RS	Hoover, AL (Hoover HS)
87	Terrance Ashe	WR	6-2	190	*So.	1VL	Cheraw, SC (Cheraw HS)
88	Kyle Johnson	WR	6-1	205	*^Gr.	SR	Charlotte, NC (Hopewell HS)
89	Brian Hill	WR	6-2	175	Sr.	TR	Clemson, SC (D.W. Daniel HS)
#	DEFENSIVE LINE	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
7	Ricky Sapp	DE	6-4	240	Jr.	2VL	Bamberg, SC (Bamberg-Ehrhardt HS)
24	Kevin Alexander	DE	6-3	255	Jr.	2VL	Raiford, FL (Union County HS)
40	Andre Branch	DE	6-5	250	*Fr.	RS	Richmond, VA (Varina HS)
42	Byron Clear	DE	6-5	225	*Fr.	RS	Hoover, AL (Hoover HS)
90	Kourtnei Brown	DE	6-4	240	So.	1VL	Charlotte, NC (Victory Christian Center School)
93	Da'Quan Bowers	DE	6-4	275	Fr.	HS	Bamberg, SC (Bamberg-Ehrhardt HS)
95	Drew Traylor	DE	6-5	240	*Fr.	RS	Birmingham, AL (Mountain Brook HS)
59	Matthew Knowles	DL	6-5	235	*Sr.	SQ	Greenville, SC (J.L. Mann HS)
89	Miguel Chavis	DL	6-5	280	So.	1VL	Fayetteville, NC (Terry Sanford HS)
50	Jock McKissic	DT	6-7	310	Sr.	3VL	Opelika, AL (Opelika HS)
57	Antwon Murchison	DT	6-5	290	*Jr.	2VL	Aberdeen, NC (Pinecrest HS)
91	Rashaad Jackson	DT	6-2	290	*Sr.	3VL	Union, SC (Union HS)
97	Dorell Scott	DT	6-3	310	*Sr.	3VL	Columbia, SC (Ridge View HS)
98	Brandon Thompson	DT	6-2	315	Fr.	HS	Thomasville, GA (Thomasville HS)
99	Jarvis Jenkins	DT	6-4	305	So.	1VL	Clemson, SC (D.W. Daniel HS)
#	DEFENSIVE BACKS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
15	Coty Sensabaugh	CB	6-0	180	*Fr.	RS	Kingsport, TN (Dobyns-Bennett HS)
18	Crezdon Butler	CB	6-0	185	Jr.	2VL	Asheville, NC (Asheville HS)
36	Byron Maxwell	CB	6-1	200	*So.	1VL	North Charleston, SC (Fort Dorchester HS)
38	Chris Chancellor	CB	5-10	165	*Jr.	2VL	Miramar, FL (Miami Edison Senior HS)
12	Marcus Gilchrist	DB	5-11	185	So.	1VL	High Point, NC (T. Wingate Andrews HS)
22	Chris Clemons	S	6-1	210	*Gr.	3VL	Arcadia, FL (DeSoto HS)
25	Michael Hamlin	S	6-3	205	*Gr.	3VL	Lamar, SC (Lamar HS)
27	Sadat Chambers	S	5-11	190	*Jr.	2VL	Pageland, SC (Central HS)
29	Haydrian Lewis	S	6-0	190	Sr.	3VL	Charleston, SC (Stratford HS)
#	LINEBACKERS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
2	DeAndre McDaniel	LB	6-1	200	So.	1VL	Tallahassee, FL (Amos P. Godby HS)
17	Stanley Hunter	LB	5-11	225	Fr.	HS	Spartanburg, SC (James F. Byrnes HS)
20	Brandon Maye	LB	6-2	225	*Fr.	RS	Mobile, AL (Davidson HS)
33	Kavell Conner	LB	6-1	225	*Jr.	2VL	Richmond, VA (Manchester HS)
41	Daniel Andrews	LB	5-11	190	Fr.	HS	Jacksonville, FL (Trinity Christian Academy)
44	Scotty Cooper	LB	6-1	215	So.	1VL	Lake City, SC (Lake City HS)
46	Brandon Oliver	LB	6-0	225	*Sr.	SQ	Summerton, SC (Scott's Branch HS)
47	Britton Whetsell	LB	6-1	210	*Sr.	SQ	Bowman, SC (Orangeburg Prep School)
46	Josh Miller	LB	6-1	230	Sr.	3VL	Manning, SC (Manning HS)
46	Jeremy Campbell	LB	6-1	220	Jr.	2VL	Port Orange, FL (Spruce Creek HS)
59	Cameron O'Sullivan	LB	5-11	225	*Sr.	SQ	Spartanburg, SC (Dorman HS)
#	KICKERS	>>>	HT	WT	YR.	EXP.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
49	Jimmy Maners	P	6-0	190	*Gr.	1VL	Rock Hill, SC (Northwestern HS)
96	Dawson Zimmerman	P	6-1	200	Fr.	HS	Lawrenceville, GA (Brookwood HS)
19	Richard Jackson	P/PK	5-11	190	*So.	SQ	Greer, SC (Riverside HS)
14	Mark Buchholz	PK	6-0	215	*Gr.	1VL	Alpharetta, GA (Chattahoochee HS)
92	John Early	PK	5-9	175	Sr.	SQ	Darlington, SC (Darlington HS)

* - spent one season as a red-shirt player; ^ - first-year transfer from East Carolina who is eligible for the 2008 and 2009 seasons; - scheduled to graduate in May and will not return for the 2009 season.

Palm trees are few, but plenty to do

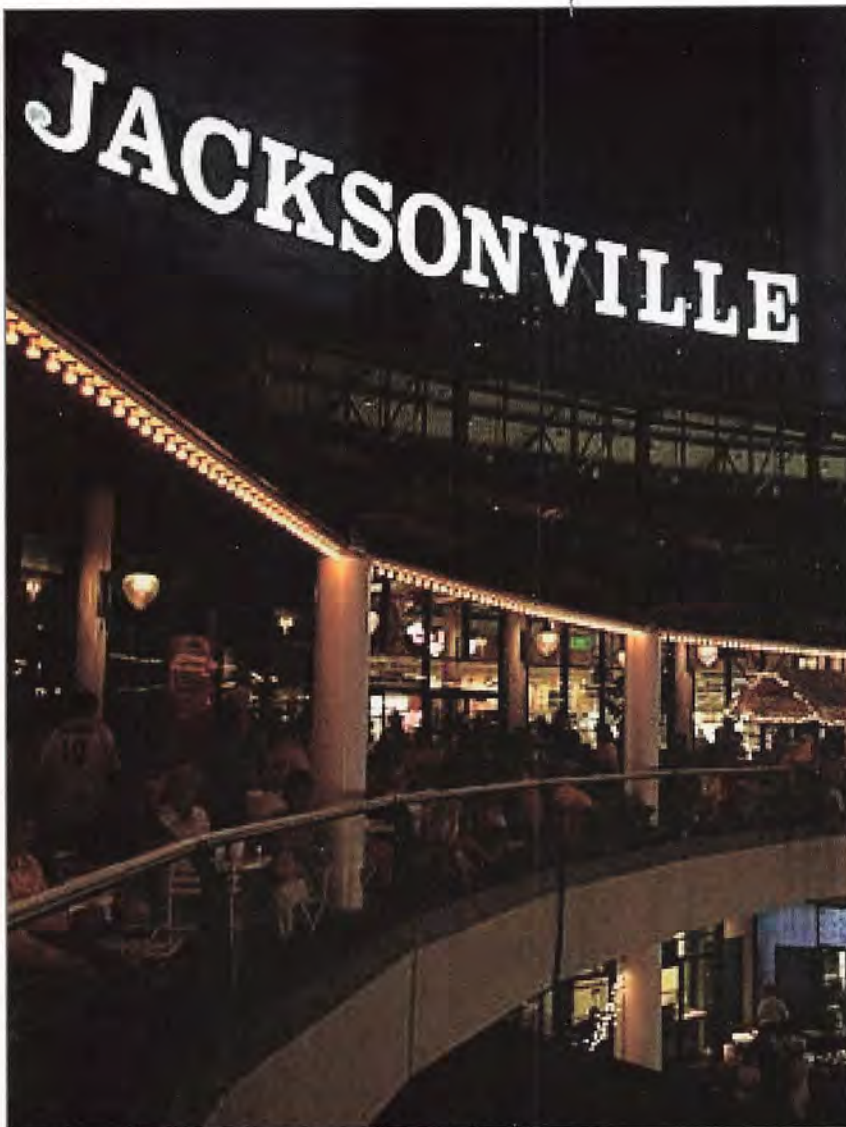
There aren't many bowl destinations Nebraska football fans haven't seen, given the storied history of the program, but a New Year's Day Gator Bowl date with Clemson in Jacksonville, Fla., is a first.

While the weather area locals commonly call "The First Coast" is certain to be warmer than a late-December day in Lincoln, don't be fooled. The Huskers may be making their 18th all-time bowl appearance in Florida, but don't expect to be basking in the sun under palm trees or dipping your toes in the ocean. The average temperature will hover around the mid-60s, but it cools off pretty quickly in the evening.

Still, it's an ideal time to get away and combine rooting for Big Red with taking in the ample sights of a new, postseason destination.

Much of the area is bounded by water. The **ST. JOHN'S RIVER** - notable because it flows south to north - cuts a wide swath through the city and surrounding area. Water taxis ferry passengers back and forth from the north and south bank areas of downtown, where the **JACKSONVILLE LANDING** is the epicenter of Gator Bowl social events.

The Landing offers a diverse assortment of eateries and watering holes. Whether you have a taste for sit-down seafood, Italian or sushi, there are a variety of restaurants to choose from. Likewise, you can begin - or cap an evening - at a martini bar, popular chain restaurants or



The Jacksonville Landing is the epicenter of Gator Bowl social events.

merely enjoying the nightly live music in the courtyard area. You can also find additional nightclub activities along **BAY STREET**, just a couple blocks from the Landing.

Just a short (cheap) cab ride from downtown is an area known locally as **FIVE POINTS**, which offers several fine dining options but becomes a hub of

activity for the younger crowd in the evenings.

The Jacksonville Beach area, which would also include **NEPTUNE** and **PONTE VEDRA BEACHES**, has its own identity, whether you're looking for a quick lunch after a daytime walk on the boardwalk or beach, or planning an evening of dinner and nightlife.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISIT JACKSONVILLE

For those who are adventurous, or perhaps staying on the outskirts of town, **ST. AUGUSTINE** is approximately 40 minutes to the south of Jacksonville off Interstate-95. The nation's "Oldest City" is a popular tourist destination and has a downtown area ideally suited for strolling with restaurants and shops interspersed with historic sites.

Nearby, shoppers will find a gauntlet of outlets bounding the East and West sides of Interstate-95, just beyond the **ANCIENT CITY** gates.

The town of **FERNANDINA BEACH** and nearby **AMELIA ISLAND**, located north of

Jacksonville and a short drive from the airport, are good getaway destinations for the day as well.

For the outgoing, few places in the country offer a wider variety of public golfing opportunities than the First Coast. **PONTE VEDRA BEACH** is the corporate home of the PGA Tour and the **TPC SAWGRASS STADIUM COURSE**, site of The Players Championship with its famed No. 17 island green. St. Augustine's World Golf Village features two resort courses as well as golf's Hall of Fame. There are literally dozens of other venues - providing a wide range of



challenges and pricing points - available to play.

If those options don't pique the interest, charter boat fishing, greyhound racing (with poker rooms) and range

of entertainment venues common to most cities, should help fill the void between arrival and kickoff. **N**

— by Bob Thomas

Gator Bowl Getaway



Amelia Inn Guest Room



#15 Ocean Links



Falcon's Nest

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

Stay with us for the 64th Annual Konica Minolta Gator Bowl! Come for the game and enjoy our friendly 1,350 acre oceanfront resort where you can golf, play tennis, hike, bike, swim, fish, shop and renew at the spa.

25% OFF RECREATION*

SHUTTLE TO THE GAME
(ADDITIONAL CHARGE)

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE RESORT

Reservations Now Being Taken

866-440-3217 • www.aipfl.com



Amelia Island Plantation®

FLORIDA'S PREMIER ISLAND RESORT™

A Designated Green Lodging Resort

GATOR BOWL GETAWAY FROM \$149*

25% off Recreation: Golf, Tennis, On-Property Nature Tours, Bicycle Rentals and more.

*Per night based on two adults in a deluxe ocean-view Amelia Inn room. Not available to conference groups. Some restrictions apply. Valid through 1/11/09.

FALLING SHORT

Nebraska's defense stepped up early in the second quarter. Clemson had driven from its own 24-yard line, 66 yards, to the Cornhusker 10, with 42 of the yards

coming on a pass play from quarterback Homer Jordan to wide receiver Frank Magwood. Nebraska monster back **SAMMY SIMS** had tipped the ball, thinking he could intercept. Instead, he deflected the ball to Magwood, who carried to the Cornhusker 12-yard line.

One play later, on second-and-8, a Jordan pass intended for Perry Tuttle was intercepted by cornerback **RIC LINDQUIST** to avert disaster and preserve a 7-6 Nebraska lead.

The preservation was short-lived, however. After two plays and a clipping penalty, the Cornhuskers faced third-and-7 at their 23-yard line. Quarterback **MARK MAUER** handed to fullback **PHIL BATES**, who fumbled. Jeff Davis, Clemson's All-America linebacker, recovered at the 27.

Again the Blackshirts stepped up. On second-and-5 from the 10-yard line, tackle **HENRY WAECHTER** hit fullback Kevin Mack; the ball came loose, and middle guard **JEFF MERRELL** recovered.

The officials ruled Mack had been down, however. Clemson retained the ball, still needing three plays to reach the end zone. Tailback Cliff Austin covered the final 2 yards, going wide right with a pitchout. A 2-point conversion attempt failed, when a Jordan pass, hurried because of pressure by Cornhusker All-America defensive end **JIMMY WILLIAMS**, fell short. Clemson led 12-7.



PHOTO COURTESY CLEMSON MEDIA RELATIONS

The undefeated and top-ranked Tigers would never relinquish the lead on their way to a 22-15 victory in the 1982 Orange Bowl game and their first, and only, national championship.

Clemson would score a clinching touchdown in the third quarter, to go up 19-7, on a 12-play, 75-yard drive that included 4-for-4 passing by Jordan, with three of the passes going to Tuttle, a senior from Winston-Salem, N.C. The last covered 13 yards, on third-and-goal, after Williams had dropped tailback Chuck McSwain for a 10-yard loss on the previous play.

The touchdown reception was Tuttle's eighth of the season, a school record.

I-back **ROGER CRAIG** ran 26 yards for a touchdown and added a 2-point conversion run early in the fourth quarter to give Nebraska a shot. But Clemson sealed the victory by controlling the ball, taking possession with 5:24 remaining and not giving it over on downs until 6 seconds were left.

The game's final play, from the Nebraska 46-yard line, was a desperation Mauer pass. **N**

— by Mike Babcock

*To read the complete recap on the 1982 Orange Bowl that was originally written by Tom Ash and published in **Huskers Illustrated**, visit HuskersIllustrated.com*

TITLE SHOT

The day's events put Nebraska in position to be a national champion. The Huskers went into the game against No. 1 Clemson ranked No. 4. Texas defeated No. 3 Alabama 14-12 in the Cotton Bowl and then Pittsburgh defeated No. 2 Georgia 24-20 in the Sugar Bowl, which also was played that night. The score was announced at the Orange Bowl with 3:13 remaining and Nebraska trying in vain to get the ball back from the Tigers for one last shot at a tie, or a victory.

STINGY DEFENSE

Clemson ranked No. 8 nationally in total defense and No. 2 in scoring defense, allowing an average of only 8.2 points per game in 11 previous victories. Only one team had managed to score more than 13 points against them. Wake Forest scored 24, in an 82-24 loss.

NO COORDINATOR

Nebraska ranked No. 6 nationally in total defense (240.5 yards per game), No. 4 in scoring defense (9.6 points per game) and No. 1 in pass defense, despite not having a defensive coordinator – at least no coach had the title. **LANCE VAN ZANDT** had left the previous season and **CHARLIE MCBRIDE**, in his fifth season as defensive line coach, wouldn't be given the coordinator title in 1982.

MISTAKES

The Cornhuskers contributed to their problems. They were penalized eight times for 64 yards and they lost 2-of-3 fumbles. The lost fumbles preceded Clemson's first field goal and touchdown, and a pass interference penalty preceded the Tigers' second field goal.

ALL-AMERICANS

The game featured four players who earned All-America honors that season: center **DAVE RIMINGTON** and defensive end **JIMMY WILLIAMS** from Nebraska and linebacker Jeff

Davis and defensive back Terry Kinard from Clemson. Rimington, a junior, won the first of his two Outland Trophies that season and was voted Big Eight "Offensive Player of the Year."

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Cornhusker I-backs **ROGER CRAIG**, a junior, and **MIKE ROZIER**, a sophomore, combined to rush for 162 yards on 25 carries. Both earned first-team All-Big Eight recognition that season. After the game, Rozier went home to Camden, N.J., and considered not returning. His mom, Beatrice – to whom he would present his Heisman Trophy in 1983 – persuaded him to go back.

SIDELINED

Sophomore **TURNER GILL**, Nebraska's all-conference quarterback, was sidelined by a leg injury, suffered in the next-to-last regular-season game against Iowa State. His replacement, senior co-captain **MARK MAUER**, had directed a 37-14 victory at Oklahoma but couldn't duplicate that magic on a humid night in Miami.

RESURGENCE

Nebraska, No. 7 in the Associated Press pre-season poll, lost two of its first three games in 1981 to fall out of the rankings. The Cornhuskers lost their opener 10-7 at Iowa and their third game 30-24 to No. 3 Penn State in Lincoln. After home victories against Auburn and Colorado, and with sophomore **TURNER GILL** stepping in as the starting quarterback, Nebraska climbed back into the rankings and would remain there for 348 consecutive weeks.

PRE-GAME HYPE

William Perry, a 6-3, 295-pound freshman from Aiken, S.C., who would earn the nickname "Refrigerator," was Clemson's starting middle guard. He and backup William Devane, a 6-2, 250-pound sophomore, would manage only one tackle between them.

REPORT CARD

RUSHING:

B+

The Cornhuskers ran for 193 yards and averaged nearly 5 yards per carry against a defense that ranked No. 7 in nation against the run. So why shouldn't the grade be even higher? Well, it's relative, really. Nebraska ranked second nationally in rushing offense, averaging 330.5 yards per game.

PASSING:

D

Quarterback **MARK MAUER** was under constant pressure. He was dropped for 16 yards in losses and completed only 5-of-15 passes for 38 yards. Nebraska's biggest pass play produced its first touchdown, with sophomore I-back **MIKE ROZIER** teaming with wingback **ANTHONY STEELS** for 25 yards.

RUSHING DEFENSE:

A-

Clemson couldn't manage even 3 yards per carry against the Blackshirts, though it was able to control the ball late in the game by running, picking up three first downs and killing just over 5 minutes on the clock to dash Nebraska's hopes of a comeback.

PASSING DEFENSE:

C+

Clemson quarterback Homer Jordan's numbers were comparable to what he had done during the season, against a Nebraska defense ranked No. 1 nationally against the pass, allowing just 100.1 yards per game. Jordan completed 11-of-22 passes for 134 yards and one touchdown, with one interception.

KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

C+

GRANT CAMPBELL punted six times and averaged 43 yards. A 62-yarder helped the average. The last of Clemson's three field goals, giving the Tigers a 22-7 lead late in the third quarter, followed a 47-yard punt return by Billy Davis, who carried to the Nebraska 22-yard line. A fake punt failed.



Mike Rozier (above) and Roger Craig combined to rush for 162 yards against Clemson.



WALKING AWAY FROM THE PAST

BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

Nebraska safety Rickey Thenarse is proud of that six-minute ESPN GameDay feature that aired Nov. 15. The feature told a poignant story of how he left behind the gang violence of Los Angeles to pursue a brighter life in Lincoln, Neb.

"It was great," Thenarse said after a Nebraska practice earlier this month. "I spoke well. I think it was a powerful message."

It was powerful and heart-wrenching and inspiring all at once.

Although Thenarse managed to escape Watts – a community in Los Angeles rife with gang violence – two older brothers have fallen victim to that violence. This past January and March, in separate incidents, Thenarse's brothers were shot and killed in apparent gang-related shootings. In the March shooting, Thenarse, home on spring break, was with his brother moments before he was killed in an apparent drive-by murder. Thenarse managed to flee before the gunfire erupted.

"That's just life back home basically," he said after the Husker practice. "People dying and going to funerals and dealing with death. It took a big chunk out of me."

According to the ESPN feature, Thenarse grew up only two blocks from the housing project that was home to the Grape Street Crips. He found his share of trouble as a youth but changed the direction of his life when he was in the ninth grade. That's when he decided to attend a juvenile detention center, Camp Holton, where he vowed to eschew the kind of trouble that was all around him.

"You have to watch your back everywhere you go around here," Thenarse's brother, Tarrence Thenarse, told ESPN.

These days, Rickey Thenarse concentrates on pushing forward.

"It can make me stronger or break me down," he told Huskers Illustrated, referring to the recent tragedies in his life. "I just look at it as something that makes me stronger and makes me want to go even harder."

Thenarse, a 6-foot, 195-pound junior, always goes hard on the playing field, which serves as a sanctuary of sorts – a place where he can block out those worries and thoughts about his old neighborhood.

He's also had to push through some on-field adversity this season. He dislocated his collarbone on the first play of Nebraska's first game, an Aug. 30 triumph over Western Michigan. He was sidelined the next two games.

"I just stayed positive," Thenarse said. "Rehab, rehab, rehab. I kept watching film, kept watching film, kept watching film. I always came to practice. I tried to come back as soon as possible, and I

eventually got my starting spot back."

After six games of mostly playing behind fellow junior Matt O'Hanlon at free safety, Thenarse started the Kansas game Nov. 8. He played the first half, with O'Hanlon playing the second. Nebraska secondary coach Marvin Sanders said he was trying to get a feel for how to best divvy playing time for the duo in the last few games.

O'Hanlon played well early in the season and was "a huge contributor for us," Sanders said. "But Rickey had been hurt and really hadn't gotten much of a look. I wanted to get Rickey in there more in some crucial moments to see how he would respond."

Thenarse obviously responded well against Kansas because he started both the Kansas State game on Nov. 15 and the Colorado game on Nov. 28, playing the entire contest against the Buffaloes and recording a season-high eight tackles, including two for losses. That performance felt good, said Thenarse, who has 23 tackles on the season, including six for losses.

"Coming out of high school, I had high hopes of coming here and starting as a freshman," he said. "It didn't happen. But I kept going at it."

A standout running back and defensive back at Jordan High School in Los Angeles, Thenarse was the only Nebraska true freshman in 2006 to play in all 14 games. Although he saw limited action in the secondary as a rookie, he became a crowd favorite with his hard-charging style and jarring hits on kick coverage.

He also saw extensive action in 2007, both on special teams and as a backup safety behind Tierre Green and Larry Asante.

Thenarse, in the late stages of this season, has done a better job of playing within the scheme of the defense, Sanders said.

"You know, Rickey loves to hit and be around the football," Sanders said. "(But) he still has those lapses sometimes."

Lapses in understanding the defense?

"No, no, no," Sanders said. "He understands the defense very well. (But) what you have to do is pull his reins in a little to stop him from thinking he can make just every play. For example, there was a play (against Colorado) when it was third-and-long. They threw a short pass and Armando (Murillo) was making a tackle, and the first guy over there was Rickey. Well, he wasn't supposed to be over there. I was appreciative of the fact he was over there to help. He knew where he was supposed to be, but he was going over there to make a play."

"No question, he knows our scheme and can execute it. But he has to play within himself and within his role on the team. We just have to get him to continue to focus a whole game. He's gotten a lot better at focusing on the overall scheme of things."

Thenarse enjoys playing for Nebraska's first-year head coach, Bo Pelini.

"It's just his personality and style of coaching – it fits my style of play," Thenarse said. "He's an intense guy and expects a lot from his players. At the same time, he's not going to thrash you if you make a mistake. He's going to coach you instead of belittling you.

"I'm willing to be coached and willing to learn and learn from those mistakes."

More important, Thenarse has shown a willingness to push through extreme adversity in his life away from the field.

"It's been pretty emotional," he acknowledged. "With everything that's happened, I could've easily gave in."

So, football is going well for Thenarse these days at Nebraska – better than ever, in fact.

He also appreciates his quality of life in Lincoln. He came to Lincoln, in part, "to get away from all that negative activity" in his Watts neighborhood.

"It's a big difference here," he said. "All of the people are nice here. You don't have to worry about nobody doing anything to you. You just live life, a normal life.

You could raise a family here. That's the difference."

Contrast those comments to the ones he made to ESPN – specifically his comments regarding his reluctance to return to his neighborhood in the wake of his brothers' murders. "I don't want to go home and have someone do something to me, or I have to do something to someone to protect myself, or put someone else in harm's way," he told ESPN.

There may always be a part of Thenarse that misses his old neighborhood.

"Growing up, like when I was in grade school, it wasn't always like that, with all of the violence and killing and everything," he said after that December practice in Lincoln.

He said he began to notice violence escalating when he was in junior high.

"Or maybe I just didn't notice it until I got older – being old enough to hang around certain dudes," he said. "It was probably a matter of being old enough and smart enough to recognize what was going on."

Nowadays, being around his teammates helps Thenarse. His close friends include junior strong safety Major Culbert and junior wideout Menelik Holt. Thenarse played

against Culbert in high school – Culbert is from Harbor City, Calif., about 15 minutes from Watts.

Holt also has endured tragedy in his family – his mother died of breast cancer in October of 2006.

"Menelik going through that and me going through my stuff – we talk about it," Thenarse said. "We both relate to it."

Still, Thenarse has rough days. Around the time of his brothers' deaths, he naturally found it difficult to concentrate on his studies at times.

"It's not that I stopped caring about school," Thenarse said. "It was just so hard to focus with all of that going on. So when I went to class, and teachers started talking, my brothers were on my mind so heavy that sometimes I couldn't even concentrate in class at all.

"I'd be in class and interacting with people – they're all happy and going about their days. Unfortunately I had a tragedy to deal with."

Thenarse strives to stay strong and positive. He has experienced things in his life many people can't even imagine.

"It was hell, I'm not going to lie," he said. "I'm still dealing with it, but it's better now." **N**



2008 Bowl Lineup

DATE	GAME	LOCATION	TV	TIME	MATCHUP
Dec. 20	New Mexico	Albuquerque, N.M.	ESPN	2:30 p.m.	Colorado State (6-6) vs. Fresno State (7-5)
Dec. 20	St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg, Fla.	ESPN2	4:30 p.m.	Memphis (6-6) vs. South Florida (7-5)
Dec. 20	Las Vegas	Las Vegas, Nev.	ESPN	8 p.m.	BYU (10-2) vs. Arizona (7-5)
Dec. 20	EagleBank	Washington D.C.	ESPN	11 a.m.	Wake Forest (7-5) vs. Navy (8-4)
Dec. 21	New Orleans	New Orleans	ESPN	8 p.m.	Southern Miss (6-6) vs. Troy (8-4)
Dec. 23	Poinsettia	San Diego	ESPN	8 p.m.	Boise State (12-0) vs. Texas Christian (10-2)
Dec. 24	Hawaii	Honolulu	ESPN	8 p.m.	Hawaii (7-6) vs. Notre Dame (6-6)
Dec. 26	Motor City	Detroit	ESPN	7:30 p.m.	Florida Atlantic (6-6) vs. Central Michigan (8-4)
Dec. 27	Meineke Car Care	Charlotte	ESPN	1 p.m.	West Virginia (8-4) vs. North Carolina (8-4)
Dec. 27	Champs Sports	Orlando	ESPN	4:30 p.m.	Wisconsin (7-5) vs. Florida State (8-4)
Dec. 27	Emerald	San Francisco	ESPN	8 p.m.	Miami (Fla.) (7-5) vs. California (8-4)
Dec. 28	Independence	Shreveport, La.	ESPN	8 p.m.	Northern Illinois (6-6) vs. Louisiana Tech (7-5)
Dec. 29	Papajohns.com	Birmingham, Ala.	ESPN	3 p.m.	North Carolina State (6-6) vs. Rutgers (7-5)
Dec. 29	Alamo	San Antonio	ESPN	8 p.m.	Missouri (9-4) vs. Northwestern (9-3)
Dec. 30	Humanitarian	Boise, Idaho	ESPN2	4:30 p.m.	Maryland (7-5) vs. Nevada (7-5)
Dec. 30	Texas	Houston	NFL Net.	8 p.m.	Rice (9-3) vs. Western Michigan (9-3)
Dec. 30	Holiday	San Diego	ESPN	8 p.m.	Oklahoma State (9-3) vs. Oregon (9-3)
Dec. 31	Armed Forces	Fort Worth, Tex.	ESPN	12:30 p.m.	Houston (7-5) vs. Air Force (8-4)
Dec. 31	Sun	El Paso, Tex.	CBS	2 p.m.	Oregon State (8-4) vs. Pittsburgh (9-3)
Dec. 31	Music City	Nashville	ESPN	3:30 p.m.	Boston College (9-4) vs. Vanderbilt (6-6)
Dec. 31	Insight	Glendale, Ariz.	NFL Net.	5:30 p.m.	Kansas (7-5) vs. Minnesota (7-5)
Dec. 31	Chick-fil-A	Atlanta	ESPN	7:30 p.m.	LSU (7-5) vs. Georgia Tech (9-3)
Jan. 1	Outback	Tampa, Fla.	ESPN	11 a.m.	South Carolina (7-5) vs. Iowa (8-4)
Jan. 1	Capital One	Orlando	ABC	1 p.m.	Georgia (9-3) vs. Michigan State (9-3)
JAN. 1	GATOR	JACKSONVILLE	CBS	1 P.M.	CLEMSON (7-5) VS. NEBRASKA (8-4)
Jan. 1	Orange	Miami	FOX	8:30 p.m.	Virginia Tech (9-4) vs. Cincinnati (11-2)
Jan. 1	Rose	Pasadena, Calif.	ABC	5 p.m.	Penn State (11-1) vs. Southern California (11-1)
Jan. 2	Cotton	Dallas	FOX	2 p.m.	Mississippi (8-4) vs. Texas Tech (11-1)
Jan. 2	Liberty	Memphis	ESPN	5 p.m.	Kentucky (6-6) vs. East Carolina (9-4)
Jan. 2	Sugar	New Orleans	FOX	8 p.m.	Utah (12-0) vs. Alabama (12-1)
Jan. 3	International	Toronto	ESPN2	Noon	Buffalo (8-5) vs. Connecticut (7-5)
Jan. 6	GMAC	Mobile, Ala.	ESPN	8 p.m.	Tulsa (10-3) vs. Ball State (12-1)
Jan. 5	Fiesta	Glendale, Ariz.	FOX	8 p.m.	Ohio State (10-2) vs. Texas (11-1)
Jan. 8	BCS Title	Miami	FOX	8 p.m.	No. 1 Oklahoma (12-1) vs. No. 2 Florida (12-1)

BIG 12 BOWL GAMES IN BOLD



FACE OF A HUSKER

BY TONY BOONE

As her stellar career at the University of Nebraska comes to a close, Jordan Larson is going through a bit of an identity crisis.

It's understandable. For nearly half of her years, the senior hitter from Hooper, Neb., has revolved her life around Husker volleyball.

She's gone from being a pre-teen with a college dream, to becoming the youngest Husker recruit ever, to earning All-America honors at Nebraska what will soon be three times, all in the span of a decade.

It's been quite a ride for the small-town girl, who said her whole life has been about

volleyball. It's hard for her to imagine her life after her senior season at Nebraska ends.

Just who is Jordan Larson if she's not the top volleyball player in the Big 12 Conference? She's been contemplating that recently, but she's yet to come up with an answer.

"I've been taking this emerging leaders class where I journal every day, and I reflect on that," Larson said. "You know, I've been looked at my whole life as a volleyball player. What am I going to be like afterward? Are people going to like me as much? Or is it going to be the hard truth? It's weird to think about because my

whole life has been planned out for me."

By the time she began playing club volleyball at age 12, Larson was already dreaming of one day playing for the Big Red. At 16, she verbally committed to Nebraska, and then played much of her prep career at Logan View High School with the words "NU recruit" attached to her name.

Now she's a soon-to-be three-time All-American, who will leave behind a legacy of all-around play that may be unmatched in Nebraska's storied volleyball history, according to Husker head coach John Cook.

FACE OF A HUSKER

"I think she's put herself at the top of the players that have been in this program," he said on the day after Larson became the first player in Big 12 history to receive two individual honors in the same season, winning the league's player-of-the-year award while also being selected as its top defender.

It was a crowning achievement for an athlete who came from an unknown town of 800 to become a household name in a state of nearly 2 million.

"I'm just a small-town girl who dreamed big about being at Nebraska," she said. "And I'm glad to be here."

Nebraska's been glad to have her. From the moment she first donned a Husker uniform, Larson has been a major factor on the court. Her stellar all-around play, which has produced more than 40 career double-doubles, has become legendary at the NU Coliseum.

"What I've always reminded Jordan of, during her entire career here, is that what makes her such a great player is that she can take over a match with any skill," Cook said. "She's great at every skill in the sport of volleyball. And there are only a couple of players in the country that are at her level in all of the skills combined.

"I think that's why she was voted the Big 12 player of the year even though some players get more hype and are more flamboyant. Jordan just gets it done, and she does a great job at all the skills. It's hard to find players that are great in all those areas."

The Nebraska coach said Larson is the type of player who always wants to touch the ball, especially in a big match against a high-caliber opponent. He compared her to a running back in football who likes to get 20 to 30 carries in a game or to a shooter in basketball who always wants to get his or her shots.

There's no doubt that on the court, Larson is a one-of-a-kind player. But off it, she said she's as Plain Jane as they come.

When she's away from volleyball, Larson just likes to relax. She spends nearly all of her free time with her boyfriend of 2 1/2 years, Luke Burbach of Lincoln, and both of their families.

The communication studies major, who is also has a minor in psychology, has dedicated herself to her coursework. After admittedly

struggling with school early on in her career at Nebraska, Larson was named a second-team Academic All-American this year.

"It's not that I didn't care about school when I got here," she said. "I knew I had to work hard at it because it wasn't going to come naturally like volleyball kind of comes naturally. Academics did not come easily for me. I've been working hard the last four years."

Larson carries a 3.31 GPA and has been an Academic All-Big 12 pick three times. She said being named an Academic All-American ranked above her volleyball feats in her mind because of the effort it took to reach that level. It's proven to her that there may be a life for her after volleyball.

"If I can really work hard at this, I can be someone and do something," she said. "I want to see what else I can do. I think I have great characteristics, like dedication and work ethic, that I can apply to some company some day. I'm not sure when that is or where that will be, but I'm curious to see what I can do."

That time will come, Larson said. Until it does, however, she plans on keeping volleyball as her top priority. The senior star, who will finish among the career leaders at Nebraska in a number of statistical categories, is hoping to continue playing somewhere after her college season is done.

The self-proclaimed small-town girl said she's amazed when she thinks of all the places volleyball has taken her. She's been throughout the country and the world while playing with the Huskers and various club and select teams.

"I've traveled the world," the former Gatorade Prep Player of the Year said as she thought about the path she's traveled in the sport.

"It'll be incredible when I sit down with my grandkids someday, and I'll be the old grandma (who's) bragging about where she's been. It's been a journey, and it'll take some reflection.

"It doesn't even seem possible. And so many people doubted it. I can sit back and see that I've did it. I don't want to be selfish, but it's a cool story. A lot of people didn't believe in what I could do."

Larson's family has always been supportive, she said. And she can't say enough about the

people she's built relationships with during her time at Nebraska.

"There really, truly is no place like Nebraska, with just with how humble and genuine people are," she said. "This world is dog-eat-dog. It's horrible. People forget a lot of things that are important, and that's the relationships you build and the time you put into other people."

Those are the things Larson will miss most, she said, when her playing days with the Huskers are through. She's grown accustomed to being a well-known, semi-celebrity throughout the state because of her play on the court, which is why she wonders how life will be for her when it's over.

"Since I grew up in Nebraska, I've kind of understood what Nebraska volleyball is all about," she said. "I think it's been easier for me to just enjoy it while I've been here. My whole life has been about (Husker) volleyball. Knowing, as a little girl, how I looked up to them, I understand what kind of meaning and impact you have on little kids. I think that's why I want to give back."

And she thinks that's why it will be hard to let go. Larson said she'll "always be a Husker," and she intends to stay in Lincoln and be around the program in some way after getting her degree. Nebraska volleyball has been her life, she said. And it's been a life she's really enjoyed.

Even with all the time she's put into the sport she loves, Larson can't think of a single thing she would've changed about the way things have gone for her. She pointed out that she never even missed out on a prom or a homecoming dance, despite the emphasis she put on volleyball.

The dedication, which began with a multitude of carpet burns while rolling around on the family floor in Hooper, has paid off with one of the most successful careers in the illustrious history of one of the nation's top programs.

"I think Jordan, being from small-town Nebraska, represents what our program is all about," Cook said. "It's small-town girls dreaming of playing for the Huskers one day, and then finally getting to do that.

At this point, she's done about everything you can do." **N**

MARIAH HUTCHINSON



SWIMMING Hutchinson experiences U.S. Olympic Trials

BY TOMMY DAHLK

Mariah Hutchinson said that competing at the U.S. Olympic Trials last July at Qwest Center

Omaha was a thrill of a lifetime.

However, now that experience is a beast of burden, you might say, for the Huskers' junior swimmer from Topeka, Kan.

Now, Hutchinson is under more pressure. The bar has been set higher, and she is looked on to be one of the Big 12's elite swimmers. But Hutchinson said she welcomes the heightened expectations.

"I'm not going to say it's easier at all," she said. "Now, sort of the pressure is on. I

really want to try to live up to what I did this summer. In a lot of ways, I think it is more of a challenge (than getting to the trials)."

Hutchinson qualified in the 100 and 200 butterfly last summer at the trials, after finishing in the top 10 in both of those events at the Big 12 Championships.

She made quite a leap from her freshman year and fine-tuned her mechanics heading into the trials.

So far this year, Hutchinson has finished eighth in the 100 butterfly at the Husker Invitational and 19th in the 200 butterfly at the Texas Invite in Austin.

Hutchinson also finished ninth in the 500 freestyle at the Husker Invitational. She said her swims at the Invitational in November weren't her best but said they laid the groundwork for the rest of the year.

"It was OK," Hutchinson said. "I could have done a lot better, but I'll take it."

Hutchinson hopes to continue to peak at the time of the Big 12 Championships in late February and advance to the NCAA Championships this year. Besides being successful individually, she also hopes the Huskers can improve on last year's sixth-place showing at the Big 12 Championships.

"We are young and have a lot of freshman," Hutchinson said. "But I think we have the potential to be as good as we were last year, if not better." **N**

2008-09 SWIMMING ROSTER

Andrews, Jess	So.	Gillette, Wyo.
Arntz, Kaitlin	Jr.	Omaha, Neb.
Balogh, Bobbi	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb.
Bolinske, Bailey	Fr.	Williston, N.D.
Bray, Cassidy	Sr.	Omaha, Neb.
Burbach, Emily	So.	Lincoln, Neb.
Claps, Tia	Fr.	Broomfield, Colo.
Criss, Karen	Jr.	Omaha, Neb.
Criss, Colleen	Jr.	Omaha, Neb.
Dean, Hailey	Jr.	San Diego, Calif.
Desormey, Claire	So.	St. Charles, Ill.
Giehl, Julie	So.	Boulder, Colo.
Grushecky, Kelsey	So.	West Newton, Pa.
Hoppenrath, Blaine	So.	Liberty, Mo.
Hutchinson, Mariah	Jr.	Topeka, Kan.
Ida, Kelsey	Jr.	Highlands Ranch, Colo.
Jolly, Courtney	Sr.	Plantation, Fla.
Kavalec, Brandie	So.	Loveland, Colo.
Leslie, Mailene	Fr.	Corvallis, Ore.
Matthies, Meredith	So.	Wichita, Kan.
McClain, Rachell	So.	Henderson, Nev.
Schmidt, D'Arcy	Fr.	Scottsdale, Ariz.
Seidel, Riley	Fr.	LaCrosse, Wisc.
Shea, Caroline	Fr.	Denver, Colo.
Stroud, Jenna	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb.
Toler, Jenny	Sr.	Elk Grove Village, Ill.
Wheeler, Anna	Fr.	Issaquah, Wash.
Yemm, Christina	Sr.	Sterling, Ill.
Ziegelmann, Sarah	Jr.	Fargo, N.D.



HUSKER QUICK HITS

FALL BOWLING

Erin McCarthy, a freshman from Omaha, led the No. 3-ranked Husker bowling team to victory in the three-day Capital City Collegiate Classic at Jackson, Miss., to finish the fall season.

McCarthy, who averaged 236, was among four Huskers to earn all-tournament honors. Sophomore Katie Ann Sopp and juniors Kaleena Henning and Cassie Leuthold also made the all-tournament team. Sopp finished second with a 216 average. Henning was third with a 214 average. And Leuthold was fifth with a 212 average. Freshman Valerie Calberry averaged 197 to finish eighth.

Nebraska finished with a 12,900-pin total, easily out-distancing runner-up Arkansas State.

The Jackson tournament victory was the Huskers' third in three outings. They opened the fall season by winning the Warhawk Classic in Fort Atkinson, Wis., and followed with a victory at the Maverick Challenge in Oak Forest, Ill. Both were three-day competitions as well.

Leuthold won her fifth career tournament title with a 200.20 average in Wisconsin then added a sixth title in Illinois, averaging 204. Calberry was second with a 192.80 average and freshman Danielle van der Meer was third, averaging 191.70, at the Warhawk Classic. Calberry, who's from Brampton, Ontario, Canada, finished fourth at the Maverick Challenge with a 196 average.

The Huskers are slated to return to action to action Jan. 16-18 at the Mid-Winter Classic in Jonesboro, Ark.

WRESTLING HONORS

Junior Jordan Burroughs was named Big 12 Wrestler of the Week the first week of December, seven days after being named the Big 12 Wrestler of the Month for November. Burroughs, an All-American at 149 pounds last season, is ranked No. 3 competing at 157 pounds this season, and improved his record to 11-0 with a pair of decisions at the Las Vegas Invitational on Dec. 6.

Burroughs went 4-0 at the Kaufman-Brand Open in Omaha the weekend before Thanksgiving, including a 6-4 victory over

former NCAA champion and sixth-ranked Dustin Schlatter of Minnesota in the finals. Burroughs was 0-3 against Schlatter before that.

Burroughs was named the Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament in Omaha and again at the Las Vegas Invitational, joining junior Craig Brester in leading Nebraska to the team victory.

Burroughs went 5-0 in Las Vegas, including victories over a pair of All-Americans on the final day, 3-2 over No. 5 J.P. O'Conner of Harvard and 10-8 over No. 6 Jordan Leen of Cornell.

Leen is the defending national champion.

Brester, also ranked No. 3, improved to 12-0 at 197 pounds with major decisions over No. 11 Logan Brown of Purdue and No. 13 Richard Starks of Army on the final day.

Nebraska's other finishers were: Brandon Browne, second at 174 pounds; Stephen Dwyer, third at 165 pounds; Tucker Lane, fourth at 285 pounds; and Matt Vacanti, eighth at 133 pounds.

CROSS COUNTRY HONORS

Sophomore Lara Crofford and redshirted freshman David Adams were named the most valuable runners on the women's and men's cross country teams this season, while senior Jen Pancoast and sophomore Brad Doering were chosen the teams' most improved runners.

Crofford was the women team's most valuable runner for a second consecutive season after leading the Huskers in every meet, including individual victories at the BYU Autumn Classic and the South Dakota State Classic. She also was a repeat All-Big 12 honoree, led the team to a sixth-place finish at the Big 12 Championships, a seventh-place finish at the NCAA Regional and a 25th-place finish at the NCAA Championships – Nebraska's first trip there since 2003.

Adams led the men's team in six of seven meets, after redshirting in 2007 while recovering from a stress fracture in a foot, suffered during his final high school track and field season.

Volleyball



Huskers, Coliseum impress NCAA opponent

BY BOB HAMAR

University of Alabama-Birmingham coach Kerry Messersmith had one question for Nebraska coach John Cook when they shook hands before their NCAA Tournament match.

Is it always like this?

Yes, Cook told her. It's always like this at the Nebraska Coliseum.

It came as no surprise that the Huskers advanced out of the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament. First, they downed Liberty University 3-1 in the opening round. Then it was UAB's turn.

The Huskers swept past the Blazers for their NCAA record-tying 87th straight home-court victory before the 119th straight sellout at the Coliseum.

Ho hum. Just another night at the Coliseum.

But it wasn't just another night, not for seniors Jordan Larson, Amanda Gates and Rachel Schwartz. It was their last match ever at the Coliseum. That fact began to sink in late in the third set against UAB.

Gates rotated in to the match with the Huskers leading 23-11. Larson was on the left side up front and Schwartz was serving. Gates thought about what a perfect ending it would be. All three seniors on the court for their final point at the Coliseum.

Gates then got a kill to make it 24-11.

"Gates grabbed me and said, 'This is the last point in the Coliseum. Make it a good one,'" Larson said.

UAB delayed the Husker celebration a bit with a point, but then Gates ended the match with a kill. It also insured the Husker seniors would go through their entire career without

ever losing at the Coliseum.

"It's pretty incredible," Gates said. "It's a great accomplishment and a great reflection of Nebraska volleyball."

So is the NCAA record 119 straight sellouts. The Huskers have sold out every single match at the Coliseum since September of 2002.

It's an honor to play for that many fans all the time," Schwartz said. "It's a huge accomplishment for the state of Nebraska and for volleyball as a sport to say there is a place where they sell out seats every year, every time.

"That's one of the main reasons I wanted to come here because the sport of volleyball here isn't just sport, it's more than that. To people here, we're more than just volleyball players."

It's hard to say which is more impressive, the 119 straight sellouts or the 87 straight victories at the Coliseum. Cook said he tries not to think about tying the Penn State record for consecutive wins, a record they could break early next season.

"I think it's an unbelievable accomplishment," Cook said. "The thing that impresses me the most is that our senior class has not lost a match in the state of Nebraska their entire careers. And for them to be able to go, once they leave and finish here, to be able to say that is unbelievable.

"And it's not like we played in a weak conference or played patsies here. We took on everybody, and that is just an incredible accomplishment in my opinion. I don't know quite what to do with it, but again I think this senior class continues to separate themselves. It's not by the most talent, it's just by heart and soul."

Liberty coach Shane Pinder saw that heart and soul in action in the first-round match. To say it made an impression on the young coach would be an understatement. Pinder compared the Coliseum to Cameron Indoor Stadium where the Duke's men's basketball team plays.

"The Coliseum is everything I thought it'd be," Pinder said. "As a young coach in this field, I've watched the Coliseum many a night, and I've always thought about what it'd be like to play here. We have a lot of respect

for Coach Cook and what he's done here. Not only for Nebraska volleyball, but he's kind of pioneering volleyball as a whole."

The Nebraska fans also received some praise from Pinder.

"The other thing that was neat was that they were a very knowledgeable crowd," Pender said. "They don't come here to watch volleyball, they knew volleyball and they respected great plays, so it was a lot of fun for our team, and we're excited to have had the opportunity to play here."

The opposing players were also excited to play at a venue with the history and tradition of the Coliseum.

"I've never played in front of anything like it," Liberty outside hitter Nicki Scripko said. "It was awesome, even though it was for the other team, there were sometimes I was like 'Oh, hey, they could be cheering for us.' It was awesome playing in front of this crowd because they were just so nice and they knew what was going on. It was a really awesome

experience."

Messersmith said the Blazers, who were just 1-24 four years ago, were honored to represent Conference USA.

"It's been a tremendous experience," Messersmith said. "Nebraska does it up right as far as just the atmosphere - the people, the people at the games, the people in town, all the workers. It's just been an experience that I've never had. That certainly made it all worth while."

LIGHT COMES UP BIG

Sophomore Lindsey Licht came up with a big match in the second-round victory over UAB. The 6-foot-5 right side hitter had 12 kills and hit .556 for the match. She missed her first two attacks of the night, but didn't have an error the rest of the way.

Cook wasn't surprised by Licht's success even though she had been struggling the last part of the regular season.

"I don't know if she got the text, but I texted her that I felt like she could dominate these guys tonight," Cook said. "I just felt like they didn't defend behind the setter very well, and then Lindsey had some huge kills in front of our setter today which we've been working hard on all season long. She had a couple really spectacular plays over there."

HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES

Gates' final kill at the NU Coliseum brought back memories for both her and Cook. As a senior at Columbus High School, Gates led the Discoverers to the Class A championship match against Bellevue West. The Thunderbirds won the title with the final point coming on an attack error by Gates.

The Huskers ran the same play for the final point against UAB.

"With the same set, the same play and the same location, she hit it out," Cook said. "She said it was in, but they called it out and that's how they ended the final point for the state championship.

"So it was nice to see her recreate that and get a big kill to end the match tonight."

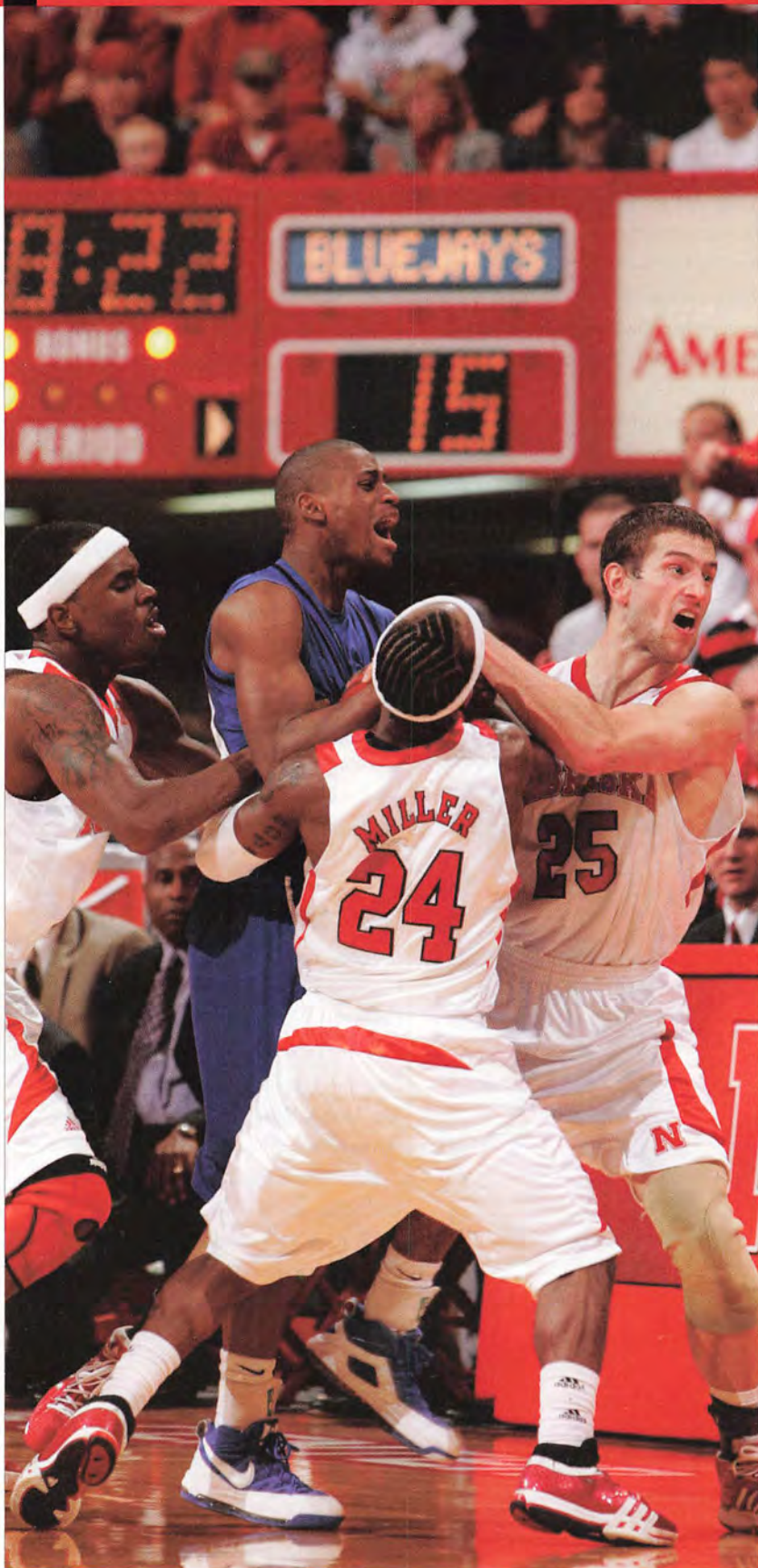
Of course Gates remembered that play from 2004 well.

"I think it was in," Gates said. "Actually, I know it was in, and they called it out." **N**

2008 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE (23-1, 14-1 BIG 12)

Aug. 29-31	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 29	*Stanford, W, 3-0
Aug. 31	*USC, W, 3-1
Sept. 1	Oral Roberts, W 3-0
Sept. 5-6	Cal Poly Invite
Sept. 5	Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 6	Cal Poly, W, 3-0
Sept. 12-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 12	LSU, W, 3-0
Sept. 13	New Mexico, W, 3-0
Sept. 17	at Kansas State, W, 3-1
Sept. 20	Texas, W, 3-1
Sept. 24	Kansas, W, 3-1
Sept. 27	at Iowa State, W, 3-1
Oct. 1	at Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Oct. 4	Colorado, W, 3-0
Oct. 5	*Creighton, W, 3-0
Oct. 8	Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 12	at Missouri, W, 3-0
Oct. 15	Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 22	Texas A&M, W, 3-0
Oct. 25	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 29	at Colorado, L, 1-3
Nov. 1	Iowa State, W, 3-1
Nov. 5	at Texas A&M, W, 3-2
Nov. 8	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Nov. 12	Missouri, W, 3-0
Nov. 15	at Kansas, TBA
Nov. 19	at Texas, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 22	Texas Tech, 7 p.m.
Nov. 29	at Baylor, 7 p.m.
Dec. 5-6	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds, TBA
Dec. 12-13	*NCAA Regionals
Dec. 18-20	*NCAA Semifinals, Finals *at Quest Center, Omaha

Men's Basketball



BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

Defense sparks Nebraska to 6-1 start

Say this about the Nebraska men's basketball team: The Huskers know how to play defense.

Through seven games, the Huskers ranked No. 8 nationally in scoring defense, allowing 53.3 points per game. The 64 points Arizona State scored against them were the most by an opponent this season. And before that game, they had been forcing 18.6 turnovers per game.

That shouldn't be a surprise, given head coach Doc Sadler's emphasis on defense. Nebraska applies great pressure, forces turnovers and, in the half court, rotates as well as any team around.

"We work on that always in practice," Nebraska point guard Cookie Miller said, "from zig-zag (drills) to whatever."

But even the defensive-minded Sadler knows a good defense can only do so much. Eventually, the offense must produce, too, and as the Huskers finish their non-conference schedule, Sadler will be looking for ways to prod what's been a non-efficient offense.

"The good news is," Sadler said, "I think that's an area we can improve in."

Nebraska, with no inside scoring presence, has virtually lived and died by 3-point shooting. See the 14-for-25 performance in an 80-51 victory over Alabama State ... and the 8-for-22 mark against Arizona State, when the Huskers were only 28.9 percent from the field overall in a 64-44 loss.

"If we would've made some of the shots we had, then things would've been a little different, too," said senior Paul Velandar, the team's leading 3-point shooter. "But when you're not making those outside shots, then you've got to get something better."

Ideally, that's something inside, although the Huskers admittedly have to take matters into their own hands, in that regard, by penetrating more. Whether it's against man-to-man or extended zone defenses, like that of Arizona State, the Huskers, Sadler said, need to get the ball inside.

"Toney McCray is a guy we've got to look at inside of a zone," Sadler said of his 6-6 freshman, "because he's probably a guy that can get shots off in there. But the bottom line is, the ball's got to go inside. You can't just play from 17 feet on out, whether it be zone, man, whatever."

Nebraska's first extensive look at a zone defense came at TCU, when the Huskers went 9 minutes, 8 seconds without a field goal and still won 62-50, despite putting TCU to the free-throw line 38 times.

The Huskers weren't much better against Arizona State's zone, suffering through a scoring drought of 7 minutes, 5 seconds in the second half.

"We didn't attack the zone, and we were hesitant," Nebraska point guard Cookie Miller said. "We weren't aggressive. We should've been more aggressive. I watched the tape, and you could just see we were just moving the ball around, we weren't trying to penetrate like we normally do."

Of course, a big man inside would help matters, but the Huskers are fielding a guard-heavy lineup with nobody taller than McCray at 6-6. Chris Balham is 6-8 but has played sparingly and missed multiple games because of a bad knee, and 6-9 Alex Chapman hasn't played while he struggles to recover from a knee injury. Alonzo Edwards (6-8) started against Alabama State but didn't play against Creighton or Arizona State.

Speaking of Creighton, the Huskers' 54-52 victory over the Bluejays on Nov. 29 has been Nebraska's highlight of the young season. The Huskers won on Ade Dagunduro's layup with 2.7 seconds left on a pass from Steve Harley.

Strong defense spurred a second-half run in that game, as Nebraska forced 24 turnovers.

At Arizona State, though, the Huskers forced only 12.

"We can't rely on that because good teams aren't going to turn the ball over," Sadler said. "Teams at this point in the season are used to playing against presses and things. I think turnovers that we've been normally getting are probably not going to be there."

WOMEN WITHOUT GRIFFIN

The good news for the Nebraska women's basketball team is the Huskers will be returning a three-year starter next season – perhaps the top player in the Big 12 Conference.

Of course, that comes with the price of Kelsey Griffin missing all of this season. The 6-2 forward from Eagle River, Alaska, announced on Dec. 2 that she's having

surgery and will redshirt.

Griffin, a two-time, first-team All-Big 12 player, suffered a bone bruise on her ankle during a pickup game in August and has never fully recovered.

"It just hasn't gotten better over the past three months," she said. "It is disappointing that I can't be out there with my teammates (but) they have made some good adjustments and have played extremely hard. I hope to be back out there with them on the court as soon as possible."

Griffin is one of only two seniors, meaning the Huskers will return everybody next season aside from guard Tay Hester.

Without Griffin, the Huskers have counted on 6-2 junior forward Cory Montgomery, who scored at least 20 points in four of five games earlier this season, which included two double-doubles.

Also, 6-3 sophomore center Catheryn Redmon made her first career start against No. 18 Ohio State, finishing with eight points, two rebounds and two blocks. Playing against last year's Big Ten Conference player of the year Jantel Lavender, Redmon responded well, holding the 6-4 Lavender to 3-of-11 shooting.

Nebraska's 69-65 home loss to the Buckeyes was only its second through the first eight games. The Huskers also lost 62-51 at New Mexico.

JONES TO MISS SEASON

Nebraska men's basketball freshman guard Bear Jones is having surgery on his ailing foot and will miss the remainder of the season.

Jones, a 6-4 guard from Fort Wayne, Ind., can apply for a medical redshirt and still have four years of eligibility remaining after this season.

Coach Doc Sadler had hoped the sharp-shooting Jones could play through the pain and hold off surgery until the postseason. It became evident Jones wouldn't be able to last when his minutes decreased and his noticeable limp increased.

Jones played in four games, averaging 11.5 minutes. He was 2-of-7 from the field, including 2-of-5 on 3-pointers, that after he scored 16 points in an exhibition victory over Chadron State. **N**

2008-09 MEN'S BASKETBALL (6-1, 0-0 BIG 12)

Date	Opponent, TV, Time
Nov. 7	Chadron State (exh.), W, 85-54
Nov. 16	San Jose State, W, 63-46
Nov. 19	at TCU, W 62-50
Nov. 22	Arkansas-Pine Bluff, W, 67-53
Nov. 25	Saint Louis, W, 71-57
Nov. 29	Creighton, W, 54-52
Dec. 3	Alabama State, W, 80-51
Dec. 7	at Arizona State, L, 64-44
Dec. 13	at Oregon State, TBA
Dec. 20	IPFW, 7 p.m.
Dec. 23	UMBC, 7 p.m.
Dec. 30	South Carolina State, 7 p.m.
Jan. 3	Maryland Eastern Shore, 2 p.m.
Jan. 5	Florida A&M, 7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Missouri, ESPN2 2 p.m.
Jan. 14	at Iowa State, 7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Kansas State, Big 12 Net, 5 p.m.
Jan. 21	at Oklahoma, ESPNU 8 p.m.
Jan. 24	Oklahoma State, Big 12 Net, 3 p.m.
Jan. 28	Kansas, ESPN2 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Texas Tech, Big 12 Net, 7 p.m.
Feb. 4	at Colorado, TBA
Feb. 7	Texas, ESPN 1 p.m.
Feb. 14	at Missouri, Big 12 Net, 12:30 p.m.
Feb. 18	Colorado, ESPNU 8 p.m.
Feb. 21	at Kansas, Big 12 Network 3 p.m.
Feb. 24	Texas A&M, ESPN2 8:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	at Kansas State, Big 12 Net, 7 p.m.
March 4	Iowa State, 6:30 p.m.
March 7	at Baylor, Big 12 Network 3 p.m.
March 11-14	at Big 12 Champ, Big 12 Net



GOTHAM GLORY - BOB DEVANEY (left) wasn't overly enthusiastic about accepting a bid from the Gotham Bowl in his first season as head coach at Nebraska. But his players were. The bid came on Dec. 4, 1962, just 11 days before the game against Miami was to be played at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The Cornhuskers didn't leave Lincoln until the day before, and then only after Devaney, with the team waiting at the airport in Lincoln, was assured a check covering travel expenses was placed in escrow. The announced paid attendance was 6,166. The turf was frozen, and the temperature never rose above 20 degrees as the Cornhuskers prevailed against a Miami team that featured 5-11, 182-pound quarterback George Mira, 36-34. The victory was Nebraska's first in a bowl game. Fullback **BILL THORNTON** (right) halfback **WILLIE ROSS** each scored two touchdowns, Ross's first coming on a 92-yard kickoff return. Devaney and co-captains Thornton and **DWAIN CARLSON** (middle) a lineman, accepted the trophy. The Gotham Bowl, established as a March of Dimes benefit, was short-lived. The 1962 game was the second and last.

GAMES REMEMBERED

Jan. 1, 1941 at Pasadena, Calif.

Stanford 21, Nebraska 13

Nebraska	7	6	0	0	-	13
Stanford	7	7	7	0	-	21

(N) Vike Francis 2 run (Francis kick)
 (S) Hugh Gallarneau 9 run (Frankie Albert kick)
 (N) Al Zikmund 33 pass Herm Rohrig (kick blocked)
 (S) Gallarneau 41 pass Albert (Albert kick)
 (S) Pete Kmetovic 39 punt return (Albert kick)

Attendance: 92,000



Roy "Link" Lyman had predicted it. After coach Biff Jones' second Nebraska team went 3-5-1 in 1938, Lyman, a former Cornhusker (1918-21) and an assistant on Jones' staff, said when the sophomores that season were seniors, they would be Rose Bowl contenders.

The Cornhuskers finished the 1940 season with an 8-1 record, the only loss coming in the opening game at Minnesota, 13-7. By mid-November, the Gophers were No. 1 in the Associated Press poll and they would remain there, finishing 8-0. Stanford would finish 9-0 and No. 2.

Because the Big Nine Conference didn't allow post-season play, Minnesota couldn't be matched against Stanford, host of the Rose Bowl game as Pacific Coast Conference champion, creating an opportunity for Nebraska, seventh-ranked and the Big Six champion.

The Cornhuskers were invited to their first bowl game on the Sunday after defeating

Kansas State 20-0. Their acceptance set off a 24-hour celebration that included Chancellor Chauncey Boucher's canceling university classes on Monday. The United Press International called it "the biggest moment since the territory of Nebraska became one of the 48 states."

A Los Angeles newspaper described the match-up as Stanford's deception against Nebraska's brawn, dexterity against muscle. The Indians - Stanford's nickname at the time - featured an innovative T-formation offense directed by 5-9, 170-pound, left-handed quarterback Frankie Albert.

Nebraska, which like just about every other college team ran from a single-wing, scored first, less than 4 minutes into the game. But Stanford responded. The Cornhuskers scored again, and again the Indians responded, taking a lead it wouldn't relinquish with an Albert extra-point kick. Pete Kmetovic's third-quarter punt return would wrap up the victory.

Oh yes, seven Nebraska starters that day had been sophomores on the 1938 team.

DID YOU KNOW? Clark Shaughnessy, in his first season as Stanford's coach after

the University of Chicago dropped football, was known as the "father of the modern T-formation." Cornhusker assistants "Link" Lyman and W.H. Browne went to Chicago to study the T-formation, which the Chicago Bears used to win the NFL championship, defeating the Washington Redskins in the title game, 73-0. Lyman played for the Bears from 1926 to 1934. Warren Alfson, one of two Cornhuskers to earn All-America honors that season, might have been Nebraska's first redshirt. The lineman from Wisner, Neb., played with the freshman team in 1936 then asked to be held out in 1937. He was 25-years-old when he played in the Rose Bowl.

Forrest Behm, also a lineman, was Nebraska's other All-American in 1940. Only one non-Nebraskan was included on the travel roster, Robert McNutt, a reserve lineman from Colby, Kan. Nebraska didn't offer any athletic scholarship aid at the time. The day after the game the Cornhuskers toured MGM Studios as guests of Robert Taylor, a well-known movie actor from Filley, Neb. Taylor was a graduate of Beatrice High School. His real name was Spangler Arlington Brugh.

CROSSWORD & TRIVIA

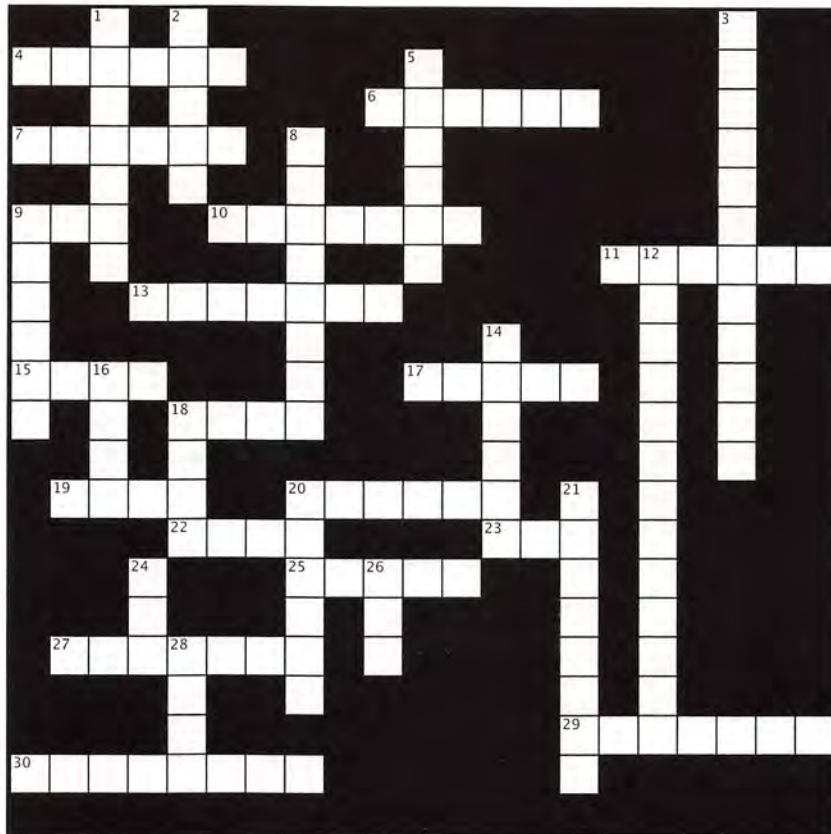
ACROSS

4. Former Clemson head coach
6. First bowl NU appeared in under Tom Osborne
7. Kicked longest field goal in NU history
9. No. of previous meetings between NU and Clemson
10. Intercepted pass in first half vs. Colorado
11. Leader in unassisted tackles for 2008
13. Non-conference opponent recently added to schedules for 2011, 2013, 2016
15. Single-season passing yards leader
17. Leader in touchdowns scored in 2008
18. Coached Clemson in previous meeting with NU
19. Leading rusher for 2008
20. Defensive end from Omaha
22. First bowl in which NU appeared
23. First-team All-Big 12 selection
25. I-back who missed Colorado game with injury
27. Ex-Husker and Green Bay running back
29. Second-team All-Big 12 selection
30. South representative in Big 12 title game

DOWN

1. Clemson head coach
2. Clemson alum who starred for Chicago Bears
3. Gator Bowl city
5. First bowl NU appeared in under Bob Devaney
8. Had two sacks vs. Colorado
9. Bowl in which NU and Clemson previously met
12. State in which Clemson is located
14. Clemson nickname
16. NU's previous appearances in Gator Bowl
18. No. of Alex Henery field goals vs. Colorado
20. Coached NU in 2003 Alamo Bowl
21. Leading tackler vs. Colorado
24. Clemson's conference
26. Network for Gator Bowl telecast
28. Ex-Husker and Baltimore punter

Answers will appear in February issue



HUSKERNUTZ



YOU ARE SO EXCITED ABOUT THE HUSKERS GETTING A BOWL BID THAT YOU REALLY DON'T CARE ABOUT THE ACTUAL LOCATION.

HAVE IDEAS?

Do you have some inspiration for a HuskerNutz cartoon?
If we use your idea, we'll give you credit and send you and autographed full-color print of your HuskerNutz cartoon!

SEND IDEAS TO: Paul Fell Cartoons,
3215 Jamestown Lane, Lincoln, NE 68516
or email to: pfell@neb.rr.com



DECEMBER 6 CROSSWORD SOLUTION





THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

New Year's Day – a Husker tradition

THE "GAPORE" IS GONE, no longer available to sports writers covering the Orange Bowl game under the cost restrictions of a newspaper's lodging allowance. A colleague at the *Lincoln Journal Star* and I made the "gapore" our home for the holidays on three or four occasions.

Its name was actually the Singapore. But the year we discovered it, the lights of the first three letters on the sign atop the hotel were burned out, leaving "gapore."

The "gapore" was old, from another era. But it was inexpensive compared to nearby hotels. And it was on the beach. The Orange Bowl game was played in Miami. But Miami Beach was the place to stay. The Nebraska football team's headquarters were often there.

The Cornhuskers typically stayed at the Sheraton Bal Harbour (previously the Americana). And the "gapore" was next door. The two shared a section of the beach. You could see cruise ships in the distance. The Sheraton was posh. The "gapore" was not.

Like the "gapore" the Sheraton Bal Harbour is gone, demolished to make way for up-scale condominiums. The Orange Bowl stadium is gone as well, razed to make way for a baseball field where the Florida Marlins will play. When Cincinnati and Virginia Tech play in the 2009 Orange Bowl game on New Year's Day night, they will do so at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla.

A week later, Florida and Oklahoma will play there for the BCS national championship.

Nebraska will play Clemson on New Year's Day afternoon, some 350 miles from Miami, in Jacksonville, Fla., in the first Gator Bowl game in Cornhusker history.

So why mention the Orange Bowl? Because it, more than any other, represents Nebraska's bowl tradition. The Cornhuskers have played in 44 bowl games all-time, 17 of them Orange Bowls. Tom Osborne took teams to Miami 11 times during 25 seasons as coach. Bob Devaney-coached teams went there five times.

Nebraska's NCAA-record streak of 35, which ended in 2004, included 14 Orange Bowls. And the Cornhuskers finished four of five national-championship seasons in Orange Bowl games. Plus, the only time Nebraska and Clemson football teams have played was in the 1982 Orange Bowl game.

Beyond that, however, the Orange Bowl, like the "gapore," represents another time, when a New Year's Day bowl meant one of four: the Orange, Cotton, Sugar and Rose.

In addition to the Gator Bowl, the Outback Bowl and Capital One Bowl will join the Rose Bowl and Orange Bowl this New Year's Day. The Cotton Bowl, Liberty Bowl and Sugar Bowl will be played the next day. The International Bowl, with Turner Gill's Buffalo team, will be played on Jan. 3, the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 5 and the GMAC Bowl on Jan. 6, all leading up to the BCS title game on Jan. 8.

The BCS has diminished the bowl season because of an all-or-nothing, only-one-game-matters mentality. And television has changed it to the point that earning a bowl bid has become a minimal expectation. There are 119 teams in the NCAA's Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) and 34 bowl games. Do the math. It's not whether a team plays in a bowl game but rather which one.

Still, Bill Callahan's four-year tenure as head coach was framed by seasons in which the Cornhuskers stayed home for the holidays, a reflection of their inability to be competitive in the conference. Bo Pelini has changed that – and, not surprisingly, right away.

What is surprising, however, is the degree of success his first team has achieved. During the three-game losing streak that included the first two Big 12 games, Nebraska fans were debating the merits of the Independence Bowl on Dec. 28 and the Insight Bowl on Dec. 31.

Both have tie-ins with the Big 12, but not enough conference teams had the requisite six victories, so the Independence Bowl will match Louisiana Tech and Northern Illinois.

In any case, the debate resumed after the 62-28 loss at Oklahoma. But the tough-minded and resilient Cornhuskers finished with three victories to earn the Gator Bowl invitation.

With a victory on New Year's Day, Nebraska would finish 9-4, having shared the Big 12 North title with Missouri. And expectations for Pelini's second season would rise accordingly.

The loss of quarterback Joe Ganz, in particular, will impact the offense ... but we're getting ahead of ourselves. The Cornhuskers have to win against Clemson first.

The only other time the teams played, a national title was at stake, for Nebraska as well as for No. 1-ranked Clemson, given how the day's other bowl games turned out.

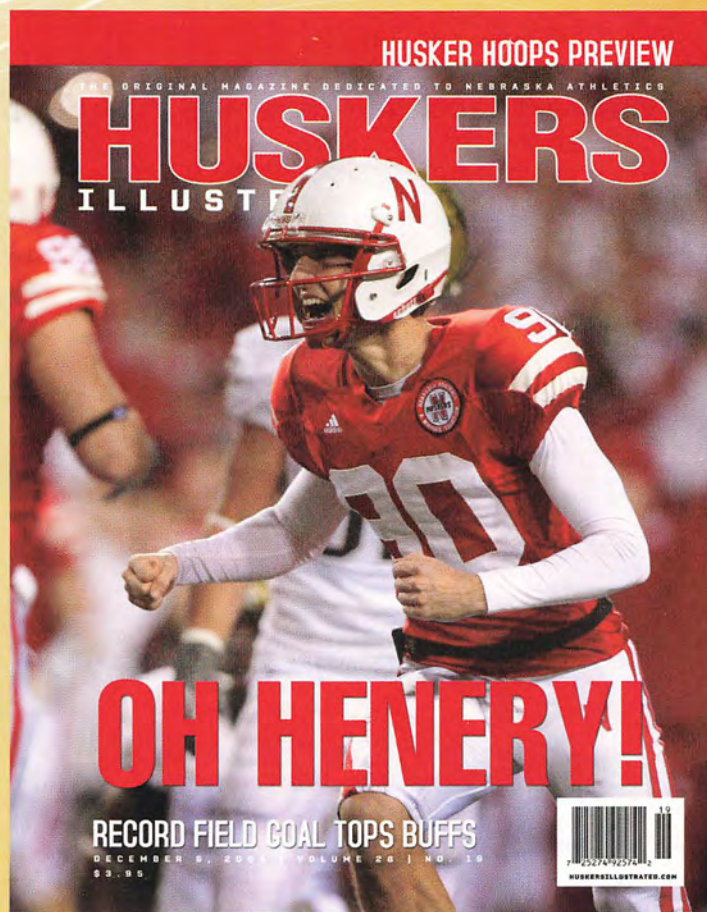
That's hardly the case this time. But in some ways the game is no less important for Pelini's program, which is trying to restore tradition in a markedly different era. **N**



Give the gift of
HUSKERS
ILLUSTRATED

To all the Nebraska fans on your holiday shopping list

ORDER YOUR ONE-YEAR
SUBSCRIPTION (19 ISSUES)
TODAY FOR
ONLY \$51.95
TO ORDER, CALL US AT
1-800-524-9527



SHOPHUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

THE WHOLE STORY ON **NEBRASKA** FOOTBALL THIS SEASON

Where serious Huskers fans go for the inside scoop

Nebraska football coverage includes:

- Expert pre- and post-game analysis
- Exclusive video highlights
- First looks at next year's recruits

PLUS!

interact with experts and insiders on
our exclusive message boards

TRY HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM
FREE FOR 7 DAYS!

